

Abraham Lincoln

*Photogravure from the Original Photograph taken  
in Chicago by Hesler early in 1857, at the  
request of members of the Illinois bar.*

*Negative was lost in the Chicago fire.*



Monograph Copy

The Life and Works of



Abraham

Lincoln

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## Lincoln and the Race Problem

**I**N HIS second inaugural, in a speech which will be read as long as the memory of this Nation endures, Abraham Lincoln closed by saying:

“With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; . . . to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.”

Immediately after his re-election he had already spoken thus:

“The strife of the election is but human nature practically applied to the facts of the case. What has occurred in this case must ever recur in similar cases. Human nature will not change. In any future great National trial, compared with the men of this, we shall have as weak and as strong, as silly and as wise, as bad and as good. Let us, therefore, study the inci-

<sup>1</sup> From an address delivered before the Republican Club of New York City, February 13, 1905.

dents of this as philosophy to learn wisdom from, and none of them as wrongs to be revenged. . . .

May not all having a common interest reunite in a common effort to (serve) our common country? For my own part, I have striven and shall strive to avoid placing any obstacle in the way. So long as I have been here I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom. While I am deeply sensible to the high compliment of a re-election, and duly grateful, as I trust, to Almighty God for having directed my countrymen to a right conclusion, as I think, for their own good, it adds nothing to my satisfaction that any other man may be disappointed or pained by the result.

"May I ask those who have not differed with me to join with me in this same spirit toward those who have?"

This is the spirit in which mighty Lincoln sought to bind up the Nation's wounds when its soul was yet seething with fierce hatreds, with wrath, with rancor, with all the evil and dreadful passions provoked by civil war. Surely this is the spirit which all Americans should show now, when there is so little excuse for malice or rancor or hatred, when there is so little of vital consequence to divide brother from brother.

Lincoln, himself a man of Southern birth, did not hesitate to appeal to the sword when he became satisfied that in no other way could the

Union be saved, for high though he put peace he put righteousness still higher. He warred for the Union; he warred to free the slave and when he warred he warred in earnest, for it is a sign of weakness to be half-hearted when blows must be struck. But he felt only love, a love as deep as the tenderness of his great and sad heart, for all his countrymen alike in the North and in the South, and he longed above everything for the day when they should once more be knit together in the unbreakable bonds of eternal friendship.

We of to-day, in dealing with all our fellow-citizens, white or colored, North or South, should strive to show just the qualities that Lincoln showed—his steadfastness in striving after the right and his infinite patience and forbearance with those who saw that right less clearly than he did; his earnest endeavor to do what was best, and yet his readiness to accept the best that was practicable when the ideal best was unattainable; his unceasing effort to cure what was evil, coupled with his refusal to make a bad situation worse by any ill-judged or ill-timed effort to make it better.

The great Civil War, in which Lincoln towered as the loftiest figure, left us not only a re-united country, but a country which has the proud right to claim as its own the glory won

alike by those who wore the blue and by those who wore the gray, by those who followed Grant and by those who followed Lee; for both fought with equal bravery and with equal sincerity of conviction, each striving for the light as it was given him to see the light; though it is now clear to all that the triumph of the cause of freedom and of the Union was essential to the welfare of mankind. We are now one people, a people with failings which we must not blink, but a people with great qualities in which we have the right to feel just pride.

All good Americans who dwell in the North must, because they are good Americans, feel the most earnest friendship for their fellow-countrymen who dwell in the South, a friendship all the greater because it is in the South that we find in its most acute phase one of the gravest problems before our people: the problem of so dealing with the man of one color as to secure him the rights that no one would grudge him if he were of another color. To solve this problem it is, of course, necessary to educate him to perform the duties, a failure to perform which will render him a curse to himself and to all around him.

Most certainly all clear-sighted and generous men in the North appreciate the difficulty and perplexity of this problem, sympathize with the

South in the embarrassment of conditions for which she is not alone responsible, feel an honest wish to help her where help is practicable, and have the heartiest respect for those brave and earnest men of the South who, in the face of fearful difficulties, are doing all that men can do for the betterment alike of white and of black. The attitude of the North toward the negro is far from what it should be, and there is need that the North also should act in good faith upon the principle of giving to each man what is justly due him, of treating him on his worth as a man, granting him no special favors, but denying him no proper opportunity for labor and the reward of labor. But the peculiar circumstances of the South render the problem there far greater and far more acute.

Neither I nor any other man can say that any given way of approaching that problem will present in our times even an approximately perfect solution, but we can safely say that there can never be such solution at all unless we approach it with the effort to do fair and equal justice among all men; and to demand from them in return just and fair treatment for others. Our effort should be to secure to each man, whatever his color, equality of opportunity, equality of treatment before the law. As a people striving to shape our actions in accordance with the great

law of righteousness we can not afford to take part in or be indifferent to the oppression or maltreatment of any man who, against crushing disadvantages, has by his own industry, energy, self-respect, and perseverance struggled upward to a position which would entitle him to the respect of his fellows, if only his skin were of a different hue.

Every generous impulse in us revolts at the thought of thrusting down instead of helping up such a man. To deny any man the fair treatment granted to others no better than he is to commit a wrong upon him—a wrong sure to react in the long run upon those guilty of such denial. The only safe principle upon which Americans can act is that of “all men up,” not that of “some men down.” If in any community the level of intelligence, morality, and thrift among the colored men can be raised, it is, humanly speaking, sure that the same level among the whites will be raised to an even higher degree; and it is no less sure that the debasement of the blacks will in the end carry with it an attendant debasement of the whites.

The problem is so to adjust the relations between two races of different ethnic type that the rights of neither be abridged nor jeopardized; that the backward race be trained so that it may enter into the possession of true freedom while the for-

ward race is enabled to preserve unharmed the high civilization wrought out by its forefathers. The working out of this problem must necessarily be slow; it is not possible in offhand fashion to obtain or to confer the priceless boons of freedom, industrial efficiency, political capacity, and domestic morality. Nor is it only necessary to train the colored man; it is quite as necessary to train the white man, for on his shoulders rests a well-nigh unparalleled sociological responsibility. It is a problem demanding the best thought, the utmost patience, the most earnest effort, the broadest charity, of the statesman, the student, the philanthropist; of the leaders of thought in every department of our national life. The Church can be a most important factor in solving it aright. But above all else we need for its successful solution the sober, kindly, steadfast, unselfish performance of duty by the average plain citizen in his everyday dealings with his fellows

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I am speaking on the occasion of the celebration of the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, and to men who count it their peculiar privilege that they have the right to hold Lincoln's memory dear, and the duty to strive to work along the lines that he laid down. We can pay most fitting

homage to his memory by doing the tasks allotted to us in the spirit in which he did the infinitely greater and more terrible tasks allotted to him.

Let us be steadfast for the right; but let us err on the side of generosity rather than on the side of vindictiveness toward those who differ from us as to the method of attaining the right. Let us never forget our duty to help in uplifting the lowly, to shield from wrong the humble; and let us likewise act in a spirit of the broadest and frankest generosity toward all our brothers, all our fellow-countrymen; in a spirit proceeding not from weakness but from strength; a spirit which takes no more account of locality than it does of class or of creed; a spirit which is resolutely bent on seeing that the Union which Washington founded and which Lincoln saved from destruction shall grow nobler and greater throughout the ages.

I believe in this country with all my heart and soul. I believe that our people will in the end rise level to every need, will in the end triumph over every difficulty that arises before them. I could not have such confident faith in the destiny of this mighty people if I had it merely as regards one portion of that people. Throughout our land things on the whole have grown better and not worse, and this is as true of one part of the country as it is of another. I believe in the

Southerner as I believe in the Northerner. I claim the right to feel pride in his great qualities and in his great deeds exactly as I feel pride in the great qualities and deeds of every other American. For weal or for woe we are knit together, and we shall go up or go down together; and I believe that we shall go up and not down, that we shall go forward instead of halting and falling back, because I have an abiding faith in the generosity, the courage, the resolution, and the common sense of all my countrymen.

The Southern States face difficult problems; and so do the Northern States. Some of the problems are the same for the entire country. Others exist in greater intensity in one section, and yet others exist in greater intensity in another section. But in the end they will all be solved; for fundamentally our people are the same throughout this land; the same in the qualities of heart and brain and hand which have made this Republic what it is in the great to-day; which will make it what it is to be in the infinitely greater to-morrow. I admire and respect and believe in and have faith in the men and women of the South as I admire and respect and believe in and have faith in the men and women of the North. All of us alike, Northerners and Southerners, Easterners and Westerners,

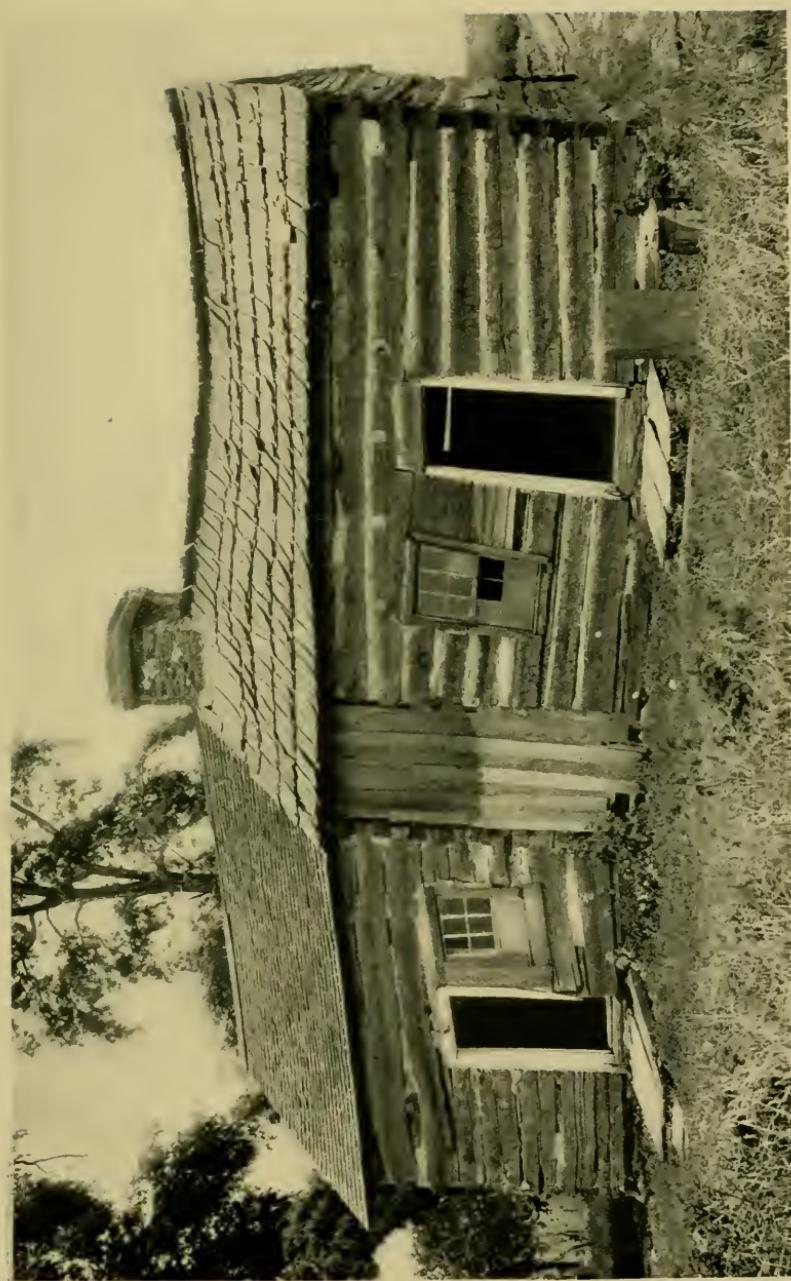
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can best prove our fealty to the Nation's post by the way in which we do the Nation's work in the present; for only thus can we be sure that our children's children shall inherit Abraham Lincoln's single-hearted devotion to the great unchanging creed that "righteousness exalteth a nation."

*Theodore Roosevelt*



Lincoln's Home in Illinois  
*Log Cabin Built by Abraham Lincoln and his  
Father in 1831 on Goose Neck Prairie, Coles  
County, Illinois.*





# Lincoln

BY S. WEIR MITCHELL

Chained by stern duty to the rock of state,  
His spirit armed in mail of rugged mirth,  
Ever above, though ever near to earth,  
Yet felt his heart the cruel tongues that sate  
Base appetites, and foul with slander, wait  
Till the keen lightnings bring the awful hour  
When wounds and suffering shall give them power.  
Most was he like to Luther, gay and great,  
Solemn and mirthful, strong of heart and limb.  
Tender and simple too; he was so near  
To all things human that he cast out fear,  
And, ever simpler, like a little child,  
Lived in unconscious nearness unto Him  
Who always on earth's little ones hath smiled.

<sup>1</sup> By special permission of *The Century Co.*



# Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln

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## LETTER TO WILLIAM H. HERNDON

WASHINGTON, February 15, 1848.

DEAR WILLIAM: Your letter of the 29th of January was received last night. Being exclusively a constitutional argument, I wish to submit some reflections upon it in the same spirit of kindness that I know actuates you. Let me first state what I understand to be your position. It is that if it shall become necessary to repel invasion, the President may, without violation of the Constitution, cross the line and invade the territory of another country, and that whether such necessity exists in any given case the President is the sole judge.

Before going further consider well whether this is or is not your position. If it is, it is a position that neither the President himself, nor any friend of his, so far as I know, has ever taken.

Their only positions are—first, that the soil was ours when the hostilities commenced; and second, that whether it was rightfully ours or not, Congress had annexed it, and the President for that reason was bound to defend it; both of which are as clearly proved to be false in fact as you can prove that your house is mine. The soil was not ours, and Congress did not annex or attempt to annex it. But to return to your position. Allow the President to invade a neighboring nation whenever he shall deem it necessary to repel an invasion, and you allow him to do so whenever he may choose to say he deems it necessary for such purpose, and you allow him to make war at pleasure. Study to see if you can fix any limit to his power in this respect, after having given him so much as you propose. If to-day he should choose to say he thinks it necessary to invade Canada to prevent the British from invading us, how could you stop him? You may say to him, "I see no probability of the British invading us;" but he will say to you, "Be silent: I see it, if you don't."

The provision of the Constitution giving the war-making power to Congress was dictated, as I understand it, by the following reasons: Kings had always been involving and impoverishing their people in wars, pretending generally, if not always, that the good of the people was the

object. This our convention understood to be the most oppressive of all kingly oppressions, and they resolved to so frame the Constitution that no one man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us. But your view destroys the whole matter, and places our President where kings have always stood. Write soon again.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

### LETTER TO U. F. LINDER

WASHINGTON, February 20, 1848.

*U. F. Linder:* . . . In law, it is good policy to never plead what you need not, lest you oblige yourself to prove what you cannot. Reflect on this well before you proceed. The application I mean to make of this rule is that you should simply go for General Taylor, because you can take some Democrats and lost no Whigs; but if you go also for Mr. Polk, on the origin and mode of prosecuting the war, you will still take some Democrats, but you will lose more Whigs; so that in the sum of the operation, you will be the loser. This is at least my opinion; and if you will look around, I doubt if you do not discover such to be the fact among your own neighbors. Further than this: by justifying Mr. Polk's mode of prosecuting the war, you put yourself in opposition to General Taylor him-

self, for we all know he has declared for, and in fact originated, the defensive line of policy.

REPORT IN THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 9, 1848.

Mr. Lincoln, from the Committee on the Post-Office and Post Roads, made the following report:

The Committee on the Post-Office and Post Roads, to whom was referred the resolution of the House of Representatives entitled "An Act authorizing Postmasters at county seats of justice to receive subscriptions for newspapers and periodicals, to be paid through the agency of the Post-Office Department, and for other purposes," beg leave to submit the following report:

The committee have reason to believe that a general wish pervades the community at large, that some such facility as the proposed measure should be granted by express law, for subscribing, through the agency of the Post-Office Department, to newspapers and periodicals which diffuse daily, weekly, or monthly intelligence of passing events. Compliance with this general wish is deemed to be in accordance with our republican institutions, which can be best sustained by the diffusion of knowledge and the due en-

couragement of a universal, national spirit of inquiry and discussion of public events through the medium of the public press. The committee, however, has not been insensible to its duty of guarding the Post-Office Department against injurious sacrifices for the accomplishment of this object, whereby its ordinary efficacy might be impaired or embarrassed. It has therefore been a subject of much consideration; but it is now confidently hoped that the bill herewith submitted effectually obviates all objections which might exist with regard to a less matured proposition.

The committee learned, upon inquiry, that the Post-Office Department, in view of meeting the general wish on this subject, made the experiment through one of its own internal regulations, when the new postage system went into operation on the first of July, 1845, and that it was continued until the thirtieth of September, 1847. But this experiment, for reasons hereafter stated, proved unsatisfactory, and it was discontinued by order of the Postmaster-General. As far as the committee can at present ascertain, the following seem to have been the principal grounds of dissatisfaction in this experiment:

(1) The legal responsibility of postmasters receiving newspaper subscriptions, or of their sureties, was not defined.

(2) The authority was open to all postmasters instead of being limited to those of specific offices.

(3) The consequence of this extension of authority was that, in innumerable instances, the money, without the previous knowledge or control of the officers of the department who are responsible for the good management of its finances, was deposited in offices where it was improper such funds should be placed; and the repayment was ordered, not by the financial officers, but by the postmasters, at points where it was inconvenient to the department so to disburse its funds.

(4) The inconvenience of accumulating uncertain and fluctuating sums at small offices was felt seriously in consequent overpayments to contractors on their quarterly collecting orders; and, in case of private mail routes, in litigation concerning the misapplication of such funds to the special service of supplying mails.

(5) The accumulation of such funds on draft offices could not be known to the financial clerks of the department in time to control it, and too often this rendered uncertain all their calculations of funds in hand.

(6) The orders of payment were for the most part issued upon the principal offices, such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore,

etc., where the large offices of publishers are located, causing an illimitable and uncontrollable drain of the department funds from those points where it was essential to husband them for its own regular disbursements. In Philadelphia alone this drain averaged \$5000 per quarter; and in other cities of the seaboard it was proportionate.

(7) The embarrassment of the department was increased by the illimitable, uncontrollable, and irresponsible scattering of its funds from concentrated points suitable for its distributions, to remote, unsafe, and inconvenient offices, where they could not be again made available till collected by special agents, or were transferred at considerable expense into the principal disbursing offices again.

(8) There was a vast increase of duties thrown upon the limited force before necessary to conduct the business of the department; and from the delay of obtaining vouchers impediments arose to the speedy settlement of accounts with present or retired postmasters, causing postponements which endangered the liability of sureties under the act of limitations, and causing much danger of an increase of such cases.

(9) The most responsible postmasters (at the large offices) were ordered by the least responsible (at small offices) to make payments upon

their vouchers, without having the means of ascertaining whether these vouchers were genuine or forged, or if genuine, whether the signers were in or out of office, or solvent or defaulters.

(10) The transaction of this business for subscribers and publishers at the public expense, and the embarrassment, inconvenience, and delay of the department's own business occasioned by it, were not justified by any sufficient remuneration of revenue to sustain the department, as required in every other respect with regard to its agency.

The committee, in view of these objections, has been solicitous to frame a bill which would not be obnoxious to them in principle or in practical effect.

It is confidently believed that by limiting the offices for receiving subscriptions to less than one tenth of the number authorized by the experiment already tried, and designating the county seat in each county for the purpose, the control of the department will be rendered satisfactory; particularly as it will be in the power of the Auditor, who is the officer required by law to check the accounts, to approve or disapprove of the deposits, and to sanction not only the payment, but to point out the place of payment. If these payments should cause a drain

on the principal offices of the seaboard, it will be compensated by the accumulation of funds at county seats, where the contractors on those routes can be paid to that extent by the department's drafts, with more local convenience to themselves than by drafts on the seaboard offices.

The legal responsibility for these deposits is defined, and the accumulation of funds at the point of deposit, and the repayment at points drawn upon, being known to and controlled by the Auditor, will not occasion any such embarrassments as were before felt; the record kept by the Auditor on the passing of the certificates through his hands will enable him to settle accounts without the delay occasioned by vouchers being withheld; all doubt or uncertainty as to the genuineness of certificates, or the propriety of their issue, will be removed by the Auditor's examination and approval; and there can be no risk of loss of funds by transmission, as the certificate will not be payable till sanctioned by the Auditor, and after his sanction the payor need not pay it unless it is presented by the publisher or his known clerk or agent.

The main principle of equivalent for the agency of the department is secured by the postage required to be paid upon the transmission of the certificates, augmenting adequately the post-office revenue.

The committee, conceiving that in this report all the difficulties of the subject have been fully and fairly stated, and that these difficulties have been obviated by the plan proposed in the accompanying bill, and believing that the measure will satisfactorily meet the wants and wishes of a very large portion of the community, beg leave to recommend its adoption.

REPORT IN THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 9, 1848.

Mr. Lincoln, from the Committee on the Post-Office and Post Roads, made the following report:

The Committee on the Post-Office and Post Roads, to whom was referred the petition of H. M. Barney, postmaster at Brimfield, Peoria County, Illinois, report: That they have been satisfied by evidence, that on the 15th of December, 1847, said petitioner had his store, with some fifteen hundred dollars' worth of goods, together with all the papers of the post-office, entirely destroyed by fire; and that the specie funds of the office were melted down, partially lost and partially destroyed; that his large individual loss entirely precludes the idea of embezzlement; that the balances due the department of former quarters had been only about twenty-five dollars;

and that owing to the destruction of papers, the exact amount due for the quarter ending December 31, 1847, cannot be ascertained. They therefore report a joint resolution, releasing said petitioner from paying anything for the quarter last mentioned.

### LETTER TO DAVID LINCOLN

WASHINGTON, March 24, 1848.

MR. DAVID LINCOLN.

*Dear Sir:* Your very worthy representative, Gov. McDowell, has given me your name and address, and as my father was born in Rockingham, from whence his father, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated to Kentucky about the year 1782, I have concluded to address you to ascertain whether we are not of the same family. I shall be much obliged if you will write me, telling me whether you in any way know anything of my grandfather, what relation you are to him, and so on. Also, if you know where your family came from when they settled in Virginia, tracing them back as far as your knowledge extends.

Very respectfully,

A. LINCOLN.

REMARKS IN THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES, March 29, 1848.

The bill for raising additional military force for limited time, etc., was reported from Committee on Judiciary; similar bills had been reported from Committee on Public Lands and Military Committee.

Mr. Lincoln said if there was a general desire on the part of the House to pass the bill now he should be glad to have it done—concurring, as he did generally, with the gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. Johnson] that the postponement might jeopard the safety of the proposition. If, however, a reference was to be made, he wished to make a very few remarks in relation to the several subjects desired by the gentlemen to be embraced in amendments to the ninth section of the act of the last session of Congress. The first amendment desired by members of this House had for its only object to give bounty lands to such persons as had served for a time as privates, but had never been discharged as such, because promoted to office. That subject, and no other, was embraced in this bill. There were some others who desired, while they were legislating on this subject, that they should also give bounty lands to the volunteers of the War of 1812. His

friend from Maryland said there were no such men. He [Mr. L.] did not say there were many, but he was very confident there were some. His friend from Kentucky, near him [Mr. Gaines], told him he himself was one.

There was still another proposition touching this matter; that was, that persons entitled to bounty land should by law be entitled to locate these lands in parcels, and not be required to locate them in one body, as was provided by the existing law.

Now he had carefully drawn up a bill embracing these three separate propositions, which he intended to propose as a substitute for all these bills in the House, or in Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, at some suitable time. If there was a disposition on the part of the House to act at once on this separate proposition, he repeated that, with the gentleman from Arkansas, he should prefer it lest they should lose all. But if there was to be a reference, he desired to introduce his bill embracing the three propositions, thus enabling the Committee and the House to act at the same time, whether favorably or unfavorably, upon all. He inquired whether an amendment was now in order.

The Speaker replied in the negative.

## LETTER TO DAVID LINCOLN

WASHINGTON, April 2, 1848.

*Dear Sir:* Last evening I was much gratified by receiving and reading your letter of the 30th of March. There is no longer any doubt that your uncle Abraham and my grandfather was the same man. His family did reside in Washington County, Kentucky, just as you say you found them in 1801 or 1802. The oldest son, Uncle Mordecai, near twenty years ago removed from Kentucky to Hancock County, Illinois, where within a year or two afterward he died, and where his surviving children now live. His two sons there now are Abraham and Mordecai; and their post-office is "La Harpe." Uncle Josiah, farther back than my recollection, went from Kentucky to Blue River in Indiana. I have not heard from him in a great many years, and whether he is still living I cannot say. My recollection of what I have heard is that he has several daughters and only one son, Thomas—their post-office is "Coryden, Harrison County, Indiana." My father, Thomas, is still living, in Coles County, Illinois, being in the seventy-first year of his age—his post-office is "Charleston, Coles County, Illinois"—I am his only child. I am now in my fortieth year; and I live

in Springfield, Sangamon County, Illinois. This is the outline of my grandfather's family in the West.

I think my father has told me that grandfather had four brothers—Isaac, Jacob, John, and Thomas. Is that correct? And which of them was your father? Are any of them alive? I am quite sure that Isaac resided on Watauga, near a point where Virginia and Tennessee join; and that he has been dead more than twenty, perhaps thirty, years; also that Thomas removed to Kentucky, near Lexington, where he died a good while ago.

What was your grandfather's Christian name? Was he not a Quaker? About what time did he emigrate from Berks County, Pennsylvania, to Virginia? Do you know anything of your family (or rather I may now say our family), farther back than your grandfather?

If it be not too much trouble to you, I shall be much pleased to hear from you again. Be assured I will call on you, should anything ever bring me near you. I shall give your respects to Governor McDowell as you desire.

Very truly yours,

A. LINCOLN.

## LETTER TO E. B. WASHBURNE

WASHINGTON, April 30, 1848.

*Dear Washburne:* I have this moment received your very short note asking me if old Taylor is to be used up, and who will be the nominee. My hope of Taylor's nomination is as high—a little higher than it was when you left. Still, the case is by no means out of doubt. Mr. Clay's letter has not advanced his interests any here. Several who were against Taylor, but not for anybody particularly, before, are since taking ground, some for Scott and some for McLean. Who will be nominated neither I nor any one else can tell. Now, let me pray to you in turn. My prayer is that you let nothing discourage or baffle you, but that, in spite of every difficulty, you send us a good Taylor delegate from your circuit. Make Baker, who is now with you, I suppose, help about it. He is a good hand to raise a breeze.

General Ashley, in the Senate from Arkansas, died yesterday. Nothing else new beyond what you see in the papers.

Yours truly,  
A. LINCOLN.

LETTER TO ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS<sup>1</sup>

WASHINGTON, April 30, 1848.

*Dear Williams:* I have not seen in the papers any evidence of a movement to send a delegate from your circuit to the June convention. I wish to say that I think it all-important that a delegate should be sent. Mr. Clay's chance for an election is just no chance at all. He might get New York, and that would have elected in 1844, but it will not now, because he must now, at the least, lose Tennessee, which he had then, and in addition the fifteen new votes of Florida, Texas, Iowa, and Wisconsin. I know our good friend Browning is a great admirer of Mr. Clay, and I therefore fear he is favoring his nomination. If he is, ask him to discard feeling, and try if he can possibly, as a matter of judgment, count the votes necessary to elect him.

In my judgment we can elect nobody but General Taylor; and we cannot elect him without a nomination. Therefore don't fail to send a delegate.

Your friend as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

<sup>1</sup> A good example of Lincoln's political shrewdness is afforded in this letter to his henchman, Williams. The Browning referred to was Orville H. Browning, a life-long friend of Lincoln's, who during his congressional career was eager for the emancipation of slaves. It was this, perhaps, that gave point to Lincoln's fear that his sympathies might run away with him in the case of Clay in 1848.

REMARKS IN THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES, May 11, 1848.

**A**BILL for the admission of Wisconsin into the Union had been passed.

Mr. Lincoln moved to reconsider the vote by which the bill was passed. He stated to the House that he had made this motion for the purpose of obtaining an opportunity to say a few words in relation to a point raised in the course of the debate on this bill, which he would now proceed to make if in order. The point in the case to which he referred arose on the amendment that was submitted by the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. Collamer] in Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, and which was afterward renewed in the House, in relation to the question whether the reserved sections, which, by some bills heretofore passed, by which an appropriation of land had been made to Wisconsin, had been enhanced in value, should be reduced to the minimum price of the public lands. The question of the reduction in value of those sections was to him at this time a matter very nearly of indifference. He was inclined

to desire that Wisconsin should be obliged by having it reduced. But the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. C. B. Smith], the chairman of the Committee on Territories, yesterday associated that question with the general question, which is now to some extent agitated in Congress, of making appropriations of alternate sections of land to aid the States in making internal improvements and enhancing the price of the sections reserved; and the gentleman from Indiana took ground against that policy. He did not make any special argument in favor of Wisconsin, but he took ground generally against the policy of giving alternate sections of land, and enhancing the price of the reserved sections. Now he [Mr. Lincoln] did not at this time take the floor for the purpose of attempting to make an argument on the general subject. He rose simply to protest against the doctrine which the gentleman from Indiana had avowed in the course of what he [Mr. Lincoln] could not but consider an unsound argument.

It might, however, be true, for anything he knew, that the gentleman from Indiana might convince him that his argument was sound; but he [Mr. Lincoln] feared that gentleman would not be able to convince a majority in Congress that it was sound. It was true the question appeared in a different aspect to persons in conse-

quence of a difference in the point from which they looked at it. It did not look to persons residing east of the mountains as it did to those who lived among the public lands. But, for his part, he would state that if Congress would make a donation of alternate sections of public land for the purpose of internal improvements in his State, and forbid the reserved sections being sold at \$1.25, he should be glad to see the appropriation made; though he should prefer it if the reserved sections were not enhanced in price. He repeated, he should be glad to have such appropriations made, even though the reserved sections should be enhanced in price. He did not wish to be understood as concurring in any intimation that they would refuse to receive such an appropriation of alternate sections of land because a condition enhancing the price of the reserved sections should be attached thereto. He believed his position would now be understood; if not, he feared he should not be able to make himself understood.

But, before he took his seat he would remark that the Senate during the present session had passed a bill making appropriations of land on that principle for the benefit of the State in which he resided—the State of Illinois. The alternate sections were to be given for the purpose of constructing roads, and the reserved sec-





tions were to be enhanced in value in consequence. When that bill came here for the action of this House—it had been received, and was now before the Committee on Public Lands—he desired much to see it passed as it was, if it could be put in no more favorable form for the State of Illinois. When it should be before this House, if any member from a section of the Union in which these lands did not lie, whose interest might be less than that which he felt, should propose a reduction of the price of the reserved sections to \$1.25, he should be much obliged; but he did not think it would be well for those who came from the section of the Union in which the lands lay to do so. He wished it, then, to be understood that he did not join in the warfare against the principle which had engaged the minds of some members of Congress who were favorable to the improvements in the western country.

There was a good deal of force, he admitted, in what fell from the chairman of the Committee on Territories. It might be that there was no precise justice in raising the price of the reserved sections to \$2.50 per acre. It might be proper that the price should be enhanced to some extent, though not to double the usual price; but he should be glad to have such an appropriation with the reserved sections at

\$2.50; he should be better pleased to have the price of those sections at something less; and he should be still better pleased to have them without any enhancement at all.

There was one portion of the argument of the gentleman from Indiana, the chairman of the Committee on Territories [Mr. Smith], which he wished to take occasion to say that he did not view as unsound. He alluded to the statement that the General Government was interested in these internal improvements being made, inasmuch as they increased the value of the lands that were unsold, and they enabled the government to sell the lands which could not be sold without them. Thus, then, the government gained by internal improvements as well as by the general good which the people derived from them, and it might be, therefore, that the lands should not be sold for more than \$1.50 instead of the price being doubled. He, however, merely mentioned this in passing, for he only rose to state, as the principle of giving these lands for the purposes which he had mentioned had been laid hold of and considered favorably, and as there were some gentlemen who had constitutional scruples about giving money for these purchases who would not hesitate to give land, that he was not willing to have it understood that he was one of those who made war against that

principle. This was all he desired to say, and having accomplished the object with which he rose, he withdrew his motion to reconsider.

## LETTER TO REV. J. M. PECK

REV. J. M. PECK.

WASHINGTON, May 21, 1848.

*Dear Sir:* On last evening I received a copy of the "Belleville Advocate," with the appearance of having been sent by a private hand; and inasmuch as it contained your oration on the occasion of the celebrating of the battle of Buena Vista, and is post-marked at Rock Spring, I cannot doubt that it is to you I am indebted for this courtesy.

I own that finding in the oration a labored justification of the administration on the origin of the Mexican war disappointed me, because it is the first effort of the kind I have known made by one appearing to me to be intelligent, right-minded, and impartial. It is this disappointment that prompts me to address you briefly on the subject. I do not propose any extended review. I do not quarrel with facts—brief exhibition of facts. I presume it is correct so far as it goes; but it is so brief as to exclude some facts quite as material in my judgment to a just conclusion as any it includes. For instance, you

say, "Paredes came into power the last of December, 1845, and from that moment all hopes of avoiding war by negotiation vanished." A little further on, referring to this and other preceding statements, you say, "All this transpired three months before General Taylor marched across the desert of Nueces." These two statements are substantially correct; and you evidently intend to have it inferred that General Taylor was sent across the desert in consequence of the destruction of all hopes of peace, in the overthrow of Herara by Paredes. Is not that the inference you intend? If so, the material fact you have excluded is that General Taylor was ordered to cross the desert on the 13th of January, 1846, and before the news of Herara's fall reached Washington—before the administration which gave the order had any knowledge that Herara had fallen. Does not this fact cut up your inference by the roots? Must you not find some other excuse for that order, or give up the case? All that part of the three months you speak of which transpired after the 13th of January, was expended in the orders going from Washington to General Taylor, in his preparations for the march, and in the actual march across the desert, and not in the President's waiting to hear the knell of peace in the fall of Herara, or for any other object. All this is to be

found in the very documents you seem to have used.

One other thing. Although you say at one point "I shall briefly exhibit facts, and leave each person to perceive the just application of the principles already laid down to the case in hand," you very soon get to making applications yourself,—in one instance as follows: "In view of all the facts, the conviction to my mind is irresistible that the Government of the United States committed no aggression on Mexico." Not in view of all the facts. There are facts which you have kept out of view. It is a fact that the United States army in marching to the Rio Grande marched into a peaceful Mexican settlement, and frightened the inhabitants away from their homes and their growing crops. It is a fact that Fort Brown, opposite Matamoras, was built by that army within a Mexican cotton-field, on which at the time the army reached it a young cotton crop was growing, and which crop was wholly destroyed and the field itself greatly and permanently injured by ditches, embankments, and the like. It is a fact that when the Mexicans captured Captain Thornton and his command, they found and captured them within another Mexican field.

Now I wish to bring these facts to your notice, and to ascertain what is the result of your re-

flections upon them. If you deny that they are facts, I think I can furnish proof which shall convince you that you are mistaken. If you admit that they are facts, then I shall be obliged for a reference to any law of language, law of States, law of nations, law of morals, law of religions, any law, human or divine, in which an authority can be found for saying those facts constitute "no aggression."

Possibly you consider those acts too small for notice. Would you venture to so consider them had they been committed by any nation on earth against the humblest of our people? I know you would not. Then I ask, is the precept "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" obsolete? of no force? of no application?

I shall be pleased if you can find leisure to write me.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

#### LETTER TO ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS<sup>1</sup>

WASHINGTON, June 12, 1848.

*Dear Williams:* On my return from Philadelphia, where I had been attending the nomination of "Old Rough," I found your letter in

<sup>1</sup> "Barnburners" was the appellation given by the Conservative Democrats to the newly formed anti-slavery party calling themselves Free-soilers. The Locofocos were the "Reform Dem-

a mass of others which had accumulated in my absence. By many, and often, it had been said they would not abide the nomination of Taylor; but since the deed has been done, they are fast falling in, and in my opinion we shall have a most overwhelming, glorious triumph. One unmistakable sign is that all the odds and ends are with us—Barnburners, Native Americans, Tyler men, disappointed office-seeking Locofocos, and the Lord knows what. This is important, if in nothing else, in showing which way the wind blows. Some of the sanguine men have set down all the States as certain for Taylor but Illinois, and it as doubtful. Cannot something be done even in Illinois? Taylor's nomination takes the Locos on the blind side. It turns the war thunder against them. The war is now to them the gallows of Haman, which they built for us, and on which they are doomed to be hanged themselves.

Excuse this short letter. I have so many to write that I cannot devote much time to any one.

Yours, as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

ocrats"; the "Native Americans" were the precursors of the Know-nothings who later would have restricted the suffrage to native born Americans.

## SPEECH IN THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, June 20, 1848.

**I**N COMMITTEE of the Whole on the State of the Union, on the Civil and Diplomatic Appropriation Bill:

*Mr. Chairman:* I wish at all times in no way to practise any fraud upon the House or the committee, and I also desire to do nothing which may be very disagreeable to any of the members. I therefore state in advance that my object in taking the floor is to make a speech on the general subject of internal improvements; and if I am out of order in doing so, I give the chair an opportunity of so deciding, and I will take my seat.

The Chair: I will not undertake to anticipate what the gentleman may say on the subject of internal improvements. He will, therefore, proceed in his remarks, and if any question of order shall be made, the chair will then decide it.

Mr. Lincoln: At an early day of this session the President sent us what may properly be called an internal improvement veto message. The late Democratic convention, which sat at

Baltimore, and which nominated General Cass for the presidency, adopted a set of resolutions, now called the Democratic platform, among which is one in these words:

That the Constitution does not confer upon the General Government the power to commence and carry on a general system of internal improvements.

General Cass, in his letter accepting the nomination, holds this language :

I have carefully read the resolutions of the Democratic National Convention, laying down the platform of our political faith, and I adhere to them as firmly as I approve them cordially.

These things, taken together, show that the question of internal improvements is now more distinctly made—has become more intense—than at any former period. The veto message and the Baltimore resolution I understand to be, in substance, the same thing; the latter being the more general statement, of which the former is the amplification—the bill of particulars. While I know there are many Democrats, on this floor and elsewhere, who disapprove that message, I understand that all who shall vote for General Cass will thereafter be counted as having approved it,—as having indorsed all its doc-

trines. I suppose all, or nearly all, the Democrats will vote for him. Many of them will do so not because they like his position on this question, but because they prefer him, being wrong on this, to another whom they consider farther wrong on other questions. In this way the internal improvement Democrats are to be, by a sort of forced consent, carried over and arrayed against themselves on this measure of policy. General Cass, once elected, will not trouble himself to make a constitutional argument, or perhaps any argument at all, when he shall veto a river or harbor bill; he will consider it a sufficient answer to all Democratic murmurs to point to Mr. Polk's message, and to the "Democratic Platform." This being the case, the question of improvements is verging to a final crisis; and the friends of this policy must now battle, and battle manfully, or surrender all. In this view, humble as I am, I wish to review, and contest as well as I may, the general positions of this veto message. When I say *general* positions, I mean to exclude from consideration so much as relates to the present embarrassed state of the treasury in consequence of the Mexican War.

Those general positions are: that internal improvements ought not to be made by the General Government—First. Because they would over-

whelm the treasury. Second. Because, while their burdens would be general, their benefits would be local and partial, involving an obnoxious inequality; and—Third. Because they would be unconstitutional. Fourth. Because the States may do enough by the levy and collection of tonnage duties; or if not—Fifth. That the Constitution may be amended. “Do nothing at all, lest you do something wrong,” is the sum of these positions—is the sum of this message. And this, with the exception of what is said about constitutionality, applying as forcibly to what is said about making improvements by State authority as by the national authority; so that we must abandon the improvements of the country altogether, by any and every authority, or we must resist and repudiate the doctrines of this message. Let us attempt the latter.

The first position is, that a system of internal improvements would overwhelm the treasury. That in such a system there is a tendency to undue expansion, is not to be denied. Such tendency is founded in the nature of the subject. A member of Congress will prefer voting for a bill which contains an appropriation for his district, to voting for one which does not; and when a bill shall be expanded till every district shall be provided for, that it will be too greatly expanded is obvious. But is this any more true

in Congress than in a State legislature? If a member of Congress must have an appropriation for his district, so a member of a legislature must have one for his county. And if one will overwhelm the national treasury, so the other will overwhelm the State treasury. Go where we will, the difficulty is the same. Allow it to drive us from the halls of Congress, and it will, just as easily, drive us from the State legislatures. Let us, then, grapple with it, and test its strength. Let us, judging of the future by the past, ascertain whether there may not be, in the discretion of Congress, a sufficient power to limit and restrain this expansive tendency within reasonable and proper bounds. The President himself values the evidence of the past. He tells us that at a certain point of our history more than two hundred millions of dollars had been applied for to make improvements; and this he does to prove that the treasury would be overwhelmed by such a system. Why did he not tell us how much was granted? Would not that have been better evidence? Let us turn to it, and see what it proves. In the message the President tells us that "during the four succeeding years embraced by the administration of President Adams, the power not only to appropriate money, but to apply it, under the direction and authority of the General Gov-

ernment, as well to the construction of roads as to the improvement of harbors and rivers, was fully asserted and exercised."

This, then, was the period of greatest enormity. These, if any, must have been the days of the two hundred millions. And how much do you suppose was really expended for improvements during that four years? Two hundred millions? One hundred? Fifty? Ten? Five? No, sir; less than two millions. As shown by authentic documents, the expenditures on improvements during 1825, 1826, 1827, and 1828 amounted to one million eight hundred and seventy-nine thousand six hundred and twenty-seven dollars one cent. These four years were the period of Mr. Adams's administration, nearly and substantially. This fact shows that when the power to make improvements "was fully asserted and exercised," the Congress did keep within reasonable limits; and what has been done, it seems to me, can be done again.

Now for the second portion of the message—namely, that the burdens of improvements would be general, while their benefits would be local and partial, involving an obnoxious inequality. That there is some degree of truth in this position, I shall not deny. No commercial object of government patronage can be so exclusively general as to not be of some pe-

cular local advantage. The navy, as I understand it, was established, and is maintained at a great annual expense, partly to be ready for war when war shall come, and partly also, and perhaps chiefly, for the protection of our commerce on the high seas. This latter object is, for all I can see, in principle the same as internal improvements. The driving a pirate from the track of commerce on the broad ocean, and the removing a snag from its more narrow path in the Mississippi River, cannot, I think, be distinguished in principle. Each is done to save life and property, and for nothing else.

The navy, then, is the most general in its benefits of all this class of objects; and yet even the navy is of some peculiar advantage to Charleston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, beyond what it is to the interior towns of Illinois. The next most general object I can think of would be improvements on the Mississippi River and its tributaries. They touch thirteen of our States—Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Iowa. Now I suppose it will not be denied that these thirteen States are a little more interested in improvements on that great river than are the remaining seventeen. These instances of the navy and the Mississippi

River show clearly that there is something of local advantage in the most general objects. But the converse is also true. Nothing is so local as to not be of some general benefit. Take, for instance, the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Considered apart from its effects, it is perfectly local. Every inch of it is within the State of Illinois. That canal was first opened for business last April. In a very few days we were all gratified to learn, among other things, that sugar had been carried from New Orleans through this canal to Buffalo in New York. This sugar took this route, doubtless, because it was cheaper than the old route. Supposing benefit of the reduction in the cost of carriage to be shared between seller and buyer, the result is that the New Orleans merchant sold his sugar a little dearer, and the people of Buffalo sweetened their coffee a little cheaper, than before,—a benefit resulting from the canal, not to Illinois, where the canal is, but to Louisiana and New York, where it is not. In other transactions Illinois will, of course, have her share, and perhaps the larger share too, of the benefits of the canal; but this instance of the sugar clearly shows that the benefits of an improvement are by no means confined to the particular locality of the improvement itself.

The just conclusion from all this is that if

the nation refuse to make improvements of the more general kind because their benefits may be somewhat local, a State may for the same reason refuse to make an improvement of a local kind because its benefits may be somewhat general. A State may well say to the nation, "If you will do nothing for me, I will do nothing for you." Thus it is seen that if this argument of "inequality" is sufficient anywhere, it is sufficient everywhere, and puts an end to improvements altogether. I hope and believe that if both the nation and the States would, in good faith, in their respective spheres do what they could in the way of improvements, what of inequality might be produced in one place might be compensated in another, and the sum of the whole might not be very unequal.

But suppose, after all, there should be some degree of inequality. Inequality is certainly never to be embraced for its own sake; but is every good thing to be discarded which may be inseparably connected with some degree of it? If so, we must discard all government. This Capitol is built at the public expense, for the public benefit; but does any one doubt that it is of some peculiar local advantage to the property-holders and business people of Washington? Shall we remove it for this reason? And if so, where shall we set it down, and be free from the

difficulty? To make sure of our object, shall we locate it nowhere, and have Congress hereafter to hold its sessions, as the loafer lodged, "in spots about"? I make no allusion to the present President when I say there are few stronger cases in this world of "burden to the many and benefit to the few," of "inequality," than the presidency itself is by some thought to be. An honest laborer digs coal at about seventy cents a day, while the President digs abstractions at about seventy dollars a day. The coal is clearly worth more than the abstractions, and yet what a monstrous inequality in the prices! Does the President, for this reason, propose to abolish the presidency? He does not, and he ought not. The true rule, in determining to embrace or reject anything, is not whether it have any evil in it, but whether it have more of evil than of good. There are few things wholly evil or wholly good. Almost everything, especially of government policy, is an inseparable compound of the two; so that our best judgment of the preponderance between them is continually demanded. On this principle the President, his friends, and the world generally act on most subjects. Why not apply it, then, upon this question? Why, as to improvements, magnify the evil, and stoutly refuse to see any good in them?

Mr. Chairman, on the third position of the message—the constitutional question—I have not much to say. Being the man I am, and speaking where I do, I feel that in any attempt at an original constitutional argument, I should not be, and ought not to be, listened to patiently. The ablest and the best of men have gone over the whole ground long ago. I shall attempt but little more than a brief notice of what some of them have said. In relation to Mr. Jefferson's views, I read from Mr. Polk's veto message:

President Jefferson, in his message to Congress in 1806, recommended an amendment of the Constitution, with a view to apply an anticipated surplus in the Treasury “to the great purposes of the public education, roads, rivers, canals, and such other objects of public improvements as it may be thought proper to add to the constitutional enumeration of the federal powers”; and he adds: “I suppose an amendment to the Constitution, by consent of the States, necessary, because the objects now recommended are not among those enumerated in the Constitution, and to which it permits the public moneys to be applied.” In 1825, he repeated in his published letters the opinion that no such power has been conferred upon Congress.

I introduce this not to controvert just now the constitutional opinion, but to show that, on the question of expediency, Mr. Jefferson's opinion

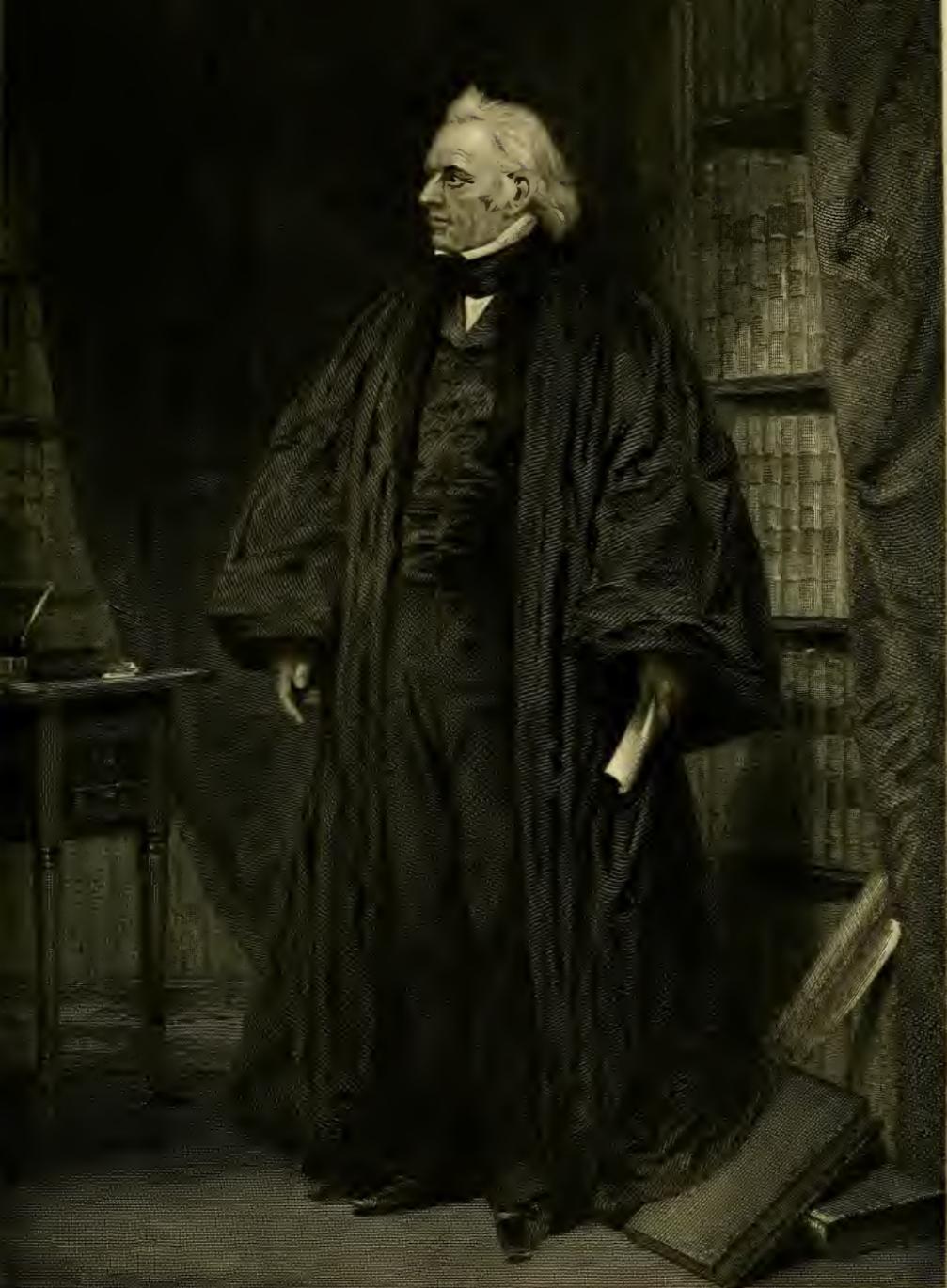
was against the present President—that this opinion of Mr. Jefferson, in one branch at least, is in the hands of Mr. Polk like McFingal's gun—"bears wide and kicks the owner over."

But to the constitutional question. In 1826 Chancellor Kent first published his "Commentaries" on American law. He devoted a portion of one of the lectures to the question of the authority of Congress to appropriate public moneys for internal improvements. He mentions that the subject had never been brought under judicial consideration, and proceeds to give a brief summary of the discussion it had undergone between the legislative and executive branches of the government. He shows that the legislative branch had usually been for, and the executive against, the power, till the period of Mr. J. Q. Adams's administration, at which point he considers the executive influence as withdrawn from opposition, and added to the support of the power. In 1844 the chancellor published a new edition of his "Commentaries," in which he adds some notes of what had transpired on the question since 1826. I have not time to read the original text on the notes; but the whole may be found on page 267, and the two or three following pages, of the first volume of the edition of 1844. As to what Chancellor

Kent seems to consider the sum of the whole, I read from one of the notes:

Mr. Justice Story, in his commentaries on the Constitution of the United States, Vol. II., pp. 429-440, and again pp. 519-538, has stated at large the arguments for and against the proposition that Congress have a constitutional authority to lay taxes, and to apply the power to regulate commerce as a means directly to encourage and protect domestic manufactures; and without giving any opinion of his own on the contested doctrine, he has left the reader to draw his own conclusions. I should think, however, from the arguments as stated, that every mind which has taken no part in the discussion, and felt no prejudice or territorial bias on either side of the question, would deem the arguments in favor of the Congressional power vastly superior.

It will be seen that in this extract the power to make improvements is not directly mentioned; but by examining the context, both of Kent and Story, it will be seen that the power mentioned in the extract, and the power to make improvements, are regarded as identical. It is not to be denied that many great and good men have been against the power; but it is insisted that quite as many, as great and as good, have been for it; and it is shown that, on a full survey of the whole, Chancellor Kent was of opinion that the arguments of the latter were vastly superior.



*Joseph Story*

AN AMERICAN JURIST AND STATESMAN

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This is but the opinion of a man; but who was that man? He was one of the ablest and most learned lawyers of his age, or of any age. It is no disparagement to Mr. Polk, nor indeed to any one who devotes much time to politics, to be placed far behind Chancellor Kent as a lawyer. His attitude was most favorable to correct conclusions. He wrote coolly, and in retirement. He was struggling to rear a durable monument of fame; and he well knew that truth and thoroughly sound reasoning were the only sure foundations. Can the party opinion of a party President on a law question, as this purely is, be at all compared or set in opposition to that of such a man, in such an attitude, as Chancellor Kent? This constitutional question will probably never be better settled than it is, until it shall pass under judicial consideration; but I do think no man who is clear on the questions of expediency need feel his conscience much pricked upon this.

Mr. Chairman, the President seems to think that enough may be done, in the way of improvements, by means of tonnage duties under State authority, with the consent of the General Government. Now I suppose this matter of tonnage duties is well enough in its own sphere. I suppose it may be efficient, and perhaps sufficient, to make slight improvements and repairs in har-

bors already in use and not much out of repair. But if I have any correct general idea of it, it must be wholly inefficient for any general beneficent purposes of improvement. I know very little, or rather nothing at all, of the practical matter of levying and collecting tonnage duties; but I suppose one of its principles must be to lay a duty for the improvement of any particular harbor upon the tonnage coming into that harbor; to do otherwise—to collect money in one harbor, to be expended on improvements in another—would be an extremely aggravated form of that inequality which the President so much deprecates. If I be right in this, how could we make any entirely new improvement by means of tonnage duties? How make a road, a canal, or clear a greatly obstructed river? The idea that we could involves the same absurdity as the Irish bull about the new boots. "I shall never git 'em on," says Patrick, "till I wear 'em a day or two, and stretch 'em a little." We shall never make a canal by tonnage duties until it shall already have been made awhile, so the tonnage can get into it.

After all, the President concludes that possibly there may be some great objects of improvements which cannot be effected by tonnage duties, and which it therefore may be expedient for the General Government to take in hand.

Accordingly he suggests, in case any such be discovered, the propriety of amending the Constitution. Amend it for what? If, like Mr. Jefferson, the President thought improvements expedient, but not constitutional, it would be natural enough for him to recommend such an amendment. But hear what he says in this very message:

In view of these portentous consequences, I cannot but think that this course of legislation should be arrested, even were there nothing to forbid it in the fundamental laws of our Union.

For what, then, would he have the Constitution amended? With him it is a proposition to remove one impediment merely to be met by others which, in his opinion, cannot be removed, —to enable Congress to do what, in his opinion, they ought not to do if they could.

Here Mr. Meade of Virginia inquired if Mr. Lincoln understood the President to be opposed, on grounds of expediency, to any and every improvement.

Mr. Lincoln answered: In the very part of his message of which I am speaking, I understand him as giving some vague expression in favor of some possible objects of improvement; but in doing so I understand him to be directly on the teeth of his own arguments in other parts

of it. Neither the President nor any one can possibly specify an improvement which shall not be clearly liable to one or another of the objections he has urged on the score of expediency. I have shown, and might show again, that no work—no object—can be so general as to dispense its benefits with precise equality; and this inequality is chief among the “portentous consequences” for which he declares that improvements should be arrested. No, sir. When the President intimates that something in the way of improvements may properly be done by the General Government, he is shrinking from the conclusions to which his own arguments would force him. He feels that the improvements of this broad and goodly land are a mighty interest and he is unwilling to confess to the people, or perhaps to himself, that he has built an argument which, when pressed to its conclusions, entirely annihilates this interest.

I have already said that no one who is satisfied of the expediency of making improvements needs be much uneasy in his conscience about its constitutionality. I wish now to submit a few remarks on the general proposition of amending the Constitution. As a general rule, I think we would much better let it alone. No slight occasion should tempt us to touch it. Better not take the first step, which may lead to a habit

of altering it. Better, rather, habituate ourselves to think of it as unalterable. It can scarcely be made better than it is. New provisions would introduce new difficulties, and thus create and increase appetite for further change. No, sir; let it stand as it is. New hands have never touched it. The men who made it have done their work, and have passed away. Who shall improve on what *they* did?

Mr. Chairman, for the purpose of reviewing this message in the least possible time, as well as for the sake of distinctness, I have analyzed its arguments as well as I could, and reduced them to the propositions I have stated. I have now examined them in detail. I wish to detain the committee only a little while longer with some general remarks upon the subject of improvements. That the subject is a difficult one, cannot be denied. Still it is no more difficult in Congress than in the State legislatures, in the counties, or in the smallest municipal districts which anywhere exist. All can recur to instances of this difficulty in the case of county roads, bridges, and the like. One man is offended because a road passes over his land, and another is offended because it does not pass over his; one is dissatisfied because the bridge for which he is taxed crosses the river on a different road from that which leads from his house to

town; another cannot bear that the county should be got in debt for these same roads and bridges; while not a few struggle hard to have roads located over their lands, and then stoutly refuse to let them be opened until they are first paid the damages. Even between the different wards and streets of towns and cities we find this same wrangling and difficulty. Now these are no other than the very difficulties against which, and out of which, the President constructs his objections of "inequality," "speculation," and "crushing the treasury." There is but a single alternative about them: they are sufficient, or they are not. If sufficient, they are sufficient out of Congress as well as in it, and there is the end. We must reject them as insufficient, or lie down and do nothing by any authority. Then, difficulty though there be, let us meet and encounter it. "Attempt the end, and never stand to doubt; nothing so hard, but search will find it out." Determine that the thing can and shall be done, and then we shall find the way. The tendency to undue expansion is unquestionably the chief difficulty.

How to do something, and still not do too much, is the desideratum. Let each contribute his mite in the way of suggestion. The late Silas Wright, in a letter to the Chicago convention, contributed his, which was worth some-

thing; and I now contribute mine, which may be worth nothing. At all events, it will mislead nobody, and therefore will do no harm. I would not borrow money. I am against an overwhelming, crushing system. Suppose that, at each session, Congress shall first determine how much money can, for that year, be spared for improvements; then apportion that sum to the most important objects. So far all is easy; but how shall we determine which are the most important? On this question comes the collision of interests. I shall be slow to acknowledge that your harbor or your river is more important than mine, and *vice versa*. To clear this difficulty, let us have that same statistical information which the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Vinton] suggested at the beginning of this session. In that information we shall have a stern, unbending basis of facts—a basis in no wise subject to whim, caprice, or local interest. The pre-limited amount of means will save us from doing too much, and the statistics will save us from doing what we do in wrong places. Adopt and adhere to this course, and, it seems to me, the difficulty is cleared.

One of the gentlemen from South Carolina [Mr. Rhett] very much deprecates these statistics. He particularly objects, as I understand him, to counting all the pigs and chickens in

the land. I do not perceive much force in the objection. It is true that if everything be enumerated, a portion of such statistics may not be very useful to this object. Such products of the country as are to be consumed where they are produced need no roads or rivers, no means of transportation, and have no very proper connection with this subject. The surplus—that which is produced in one place to be consumed in another; the capacity of each locality for producing a greater surplus; the natural means of transportation, and their susceptibility of improvement; the hindrances, delays, and losses of life and property during transportation, and the causes of each, would be among the most valuable statistics in this connection. From these it would readily appear where a given amount of expenditure would do the most good. These statistics might be equally accessible, as they would be equally useful, to both the nation and the States. In this way, and by these means, let the nation take hold of the larger works, and the States the smaller ones; and thus, working in a meeting direction, discreetly, but steadily and firmly, what is made unequal in one place may be equalized in another, extravagance avoided, and the whole country put on that career of prosperity which shall correspond with its extent of territory, its natural resources, and the intelligence and enterprise of its people.

## LETTER TO WILLIAM H. HERNDON

WASHINGTON, June 22, 1848.

EAR WILLIAM: Last night I was attending a sort of caucus of the Whig members, held in relation to the coming presidential election. The whole field of the nation was scanned, and all is high hope and confidence. Illinois is expected to better her condition in this race. Under these circumstances, judge how heartrending it was to come to my room and find and read your discouraging letter of the 15th. We have made no gains, but have lost "H. R. Robinson, Turner, Campbell, and four or five more." Tell Arney to reconsider, if he would be saved. Baker and I used to do something, but I think you attach more importance to our absence than is just. There is another cause. In 1840, for instance, we had two senators and five representatives in Sangamon; now we have part of one senator and two representatives. With quite one-third more people than we had then, we have only half the sort of offices which are sought by men of the speaking sort of talent. This, I think, is the chief cause. Now, as to the young

men. You must not wait to be brought forward by the older men. For instance, do you suppose that I should ever have got into notice if I had waited to be hunted up and pushed forward by older men? You young men get together and form a "Rough and Ready Club," and have regular meetings and speeches. Take in everybody you can get. Harrison Grimsley, L. A. Enos, Lee Kimball, and C. W. Matheny will do to begin the thing; but as you go along gather up all the shrewd, wild boys about town, whether just of age or a little under age,—Chris. Logan, Reddick Ridgely, Lewis Zwizler, and hundreds such. Let every one play the part he can play best,—some speak, some sing, and all "holler." Your meetings will be of evenings; the older men, and the women, will go to hear you; so that it will not only contribute to the election of "Old Zach," but will be an interesting pastime, and improving to the intellectual faculties of all engaged. Don't fail to do this.

You ask me to send you all the speeches made about "Old Zach," the war, etc. Now this makes me a little impatient. I have regularly sent you the "Congressional Globe" and "Appendix," and you cannot have examined them, or you would have discovered that they contain every speech made by every man in both houses of Congress, on every subject, during the session.

Can I send any more? Can I send speeches that nobody has made? Thinking it would be most natural that the newspapers would feel interested to give at least some of the speeches to their readers, I at the beginning of the session made arrangements to have one copy of the "Globe" and "Appendix" regularly sent to each Whig paper of the district. And yet, with the exception of my own little speech, which was published in two only of the then five, now four, Whig papers, I do not remember having seen a single speech, or even extract from one, in any single one of those papers. With equal and full means on both sides, I will venture that the "State Register" has thrown before its readers more of Locofoco speeches in a month than all the Whig paper of the district has done of Whig speeches during the session.

If you wish a full understanding of the war, I repeat what I believe I said to you in a letter once before, that the whole, or nearly so, is to be found in the speech of Dixon of Connecticut. This I sent you in pamphlet as well as in the "Globe." Examine and study every sentence of that speech thoroughly, and you will understand the whole subject. You ask how Congress came to declare that war had existed by the act of Mexico. Is it possible you don't understand that yet? You have had at least twenty speeches

in your possession that fully explain it. I will, however, try it once more. The news reached Washington of the commencement of hostilities on the Rio Grande, and of the great peril of General Taylor's army. Everybody, Whigs and Democrats, was for sending them aid, in men and money. It was necessary to pass a bill for this. The Locos had a majority in both houses, and they brought in a bill with a preamble saying: *Whereas*, War exists by the act of Mexico, therefore we send General Taylor money. The Whigs moved to strike out the preamble, so that they could vote to send the men and money, without saying anything about how the war commenced; and being in the minority, they were voted down, and the preamble was retained. Then, on the passage of the bill, the question came upon them, Shall we vote for preamble and bill together, or against both together? They did not want to vote against sending help to General Taylor, and therefore they voted for both together. Is there any difficulty in understanding this? Even my little speech shows how this was; and if you will go to the library, you may get the "Journal" of 1845-46, in which you will find the whole for yourself.

We have nothing published yet with special reference to the Taylor race; but we soon will have, and then I will send them to everybody.

I made an internal-improvement speech day before yesterday, which I shall send home as soon as I can get it written out and printed,—and which I suppose nobody will read.

Your friend as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

#### LETTER TO HORACE GREELEY

WASHINGTON, June 27, 1848.

*Friend Greeley:* In the "Tribune" of yesterday I discovered a little editorial paragraph in relation to Colonel Wentworth of Illinois, in which, in relation to the boundary of Texas, you say: "All Whigs and many Democrats having ever contended it stopped at the Nueces." Now this is a mistake which I dislike to see go uncorrected in a leading Whig paper. Since I have been here, I know a large majority of such Whigs of the House of Representatives as have spoken on the question have not taken that position. Their position, and in my opinion the true position, is that the boundary of Texas extended just so far as American settlements taking part in her revolution extended; and that as a matter of fact those settlements did extend, at one or two points, beyond the Nueces, but not anywhere near the Rio Grande at any point. The "stupendous desert" between the valleys of those two

rivers, and not either river, has been insisted on by the Whigs as the true boundary.

Will you look at this? By putting us in the position of insisting on the line of the Nueces, you put us in a position which, in my opinion, we cannot maintain, and which therefore gives the Democrats an advantage of us. If the degree of arrogance is not too great, may I ask you to examine what I said on this very point in the printed speech I send you. Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

#### REMARKS IN THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, June 28, 1848

Discussion as to salary of judge of western Virginia.—Wishing to increase it from \$1800 to \$2500.

Mr. Lincoln said he felt unwilling to be either unjust or ungenerous, and he wanted to understand the real case of this judicial officer. The gentleman from Virginia had stated that he had to hold eleven courts. Now everybody knew that it was not the habit of the district judges of the United States in other States to hold anything like that number of courts; and he therefore took it for granted that this must happen under a peculiar law which required that large number of courts to be holden every year; and these laws, he further supposed, were passed at

the request of the people of that judicial district. It came, then, to this: that the people in the western district of Virginia had got eleven courts to be held among them in one year, for their own accommodation; and being thus better accommodated than their neighbors elsewhere, they wanted their judge to be a little better paid. In Illinois there had been, until the present season, but one district court held in the year. There were now to be two. Could it be that the western district of Virginia furnished more business for a judge than the whole State of Illinois?

#### FRAGMENT, [July 1?] 1848

The following paper was written by Lincoln in 1848 as being what he thought General Taylor ought to say:

The question of a national bank is at rest. Were I President, I should not urge its reagitation upon Congress; but should Congress see fit to pass an act to establish such an institution, I should not arrest it by the veto, unless I should consider the subject to some constitutional objection from which I believe the two former banks to have been free.

It appears to me that the national debt created by the war renders a modification of the existing tariff indispensable; and when it shall be modified I should be pleased to see it adjusted with

a due reference to the protection of our home industry. The particulars, it appears to me, must and should be left to the untrammeled discretion of Congress.

As to the Mexican war, I still think the defensive line policy the best to terminate it. In a final treaty of peace, we shall probably be under a sort of necessity of taking some territory; but it is my desire that we shall not acquire any extending so far south as to enlarge and aggravate the distracting question of slavery. Should I come into the presidency before these questions shall be settled, I should act in relation to them in accordance with the views here expressed.

Finally, were I President, I should desire the legislation of the country to rest with Congress, uninfluenced by the executive in its origin or progress, and undisturbed by the veto unless in very special and clear cases.

#### LETTER TO WILLIAM H. HERNDON

WASHINGTON, July 10, 1848.

*Dear William:* Your letter covering the newspaper slips was received last night. The subject of that letter is exceedingly painful to me; and I cannot but think there is some mistake in your impression of the motives of the old men. I suppose I am now one of the old men; and I declare, on my veracity, which I think is

good with you, that nothing could afford me more satisfaction than to learn that you and others of my young friends at home are doing battle in the contest, and endearing themselves to the people, and taking a stand far above any I have ever been able to reach in their admiration. I cannot conceive that other old men feel differently. Of course I cannot demonstrate what I say; but I was young once, and I am sure I was never ungenerously thrust back. I hardly know what to say. The way for a young man to rise is to improve himself every way he can, never suspecting that anybody wishes to hinder him. Allow me to assure you that suspicion and jealousy never did help any man in any situation. There may sometimes be ungenerous attempts to keep a young man down; and they will succeed, too, if he allows his mind to be diverted from its true channel to brood over the attempted injury. Cast about, and see if this feeling has not injured every person you have ever known to fall into it.

Now, in what I have said, I am sure you will suspect nothing but sincere friendship. I would save you from a fatal error. You have been a laborious, studious young man. You are far better informed on almost all subjects than I have been. You cannot fail in any laudable object, unless you allow your mind to be improp-

erly directed. I have somewhat the advantage of you in the world's experience, merely by being older; and it is this that induces me to advise. You still seem to be a little mistaken about the "Congressional Globe" and "Appendix." They contain all of the speeches that are published in any way. My speech and Dayton's speech, which you say you got in pamphlet form, are both, word for word, in the "Appendix." I repeat again, all are there.

Your friend, as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

\*LETTER TO S. A. HURLBUT<sup>1</sup>

WASHINGTON, July 10, 1848.

*Friend Hurlbut:* Your letter of a recent date was duly received. I could think of no better way of fitting you out, than by sending you the *Battery*, the first number of which, together with the prospectus, I send by this mail. If it strikes you as giving promise of being a good campaign paper, please get as many subscribers as you can and send them on. I have put you down for one copy, the subscription for which I will pay myself, if you are not satisfied with it.

Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

<sup>1</sup> This was written on a prospectus of a new Whig paper called the *Battery*, published in Washington, with a view to promote the election of Gen. Zachary Taylor to the Presidency, and Millard Fillmore to the Vice-Presidency of the United States.

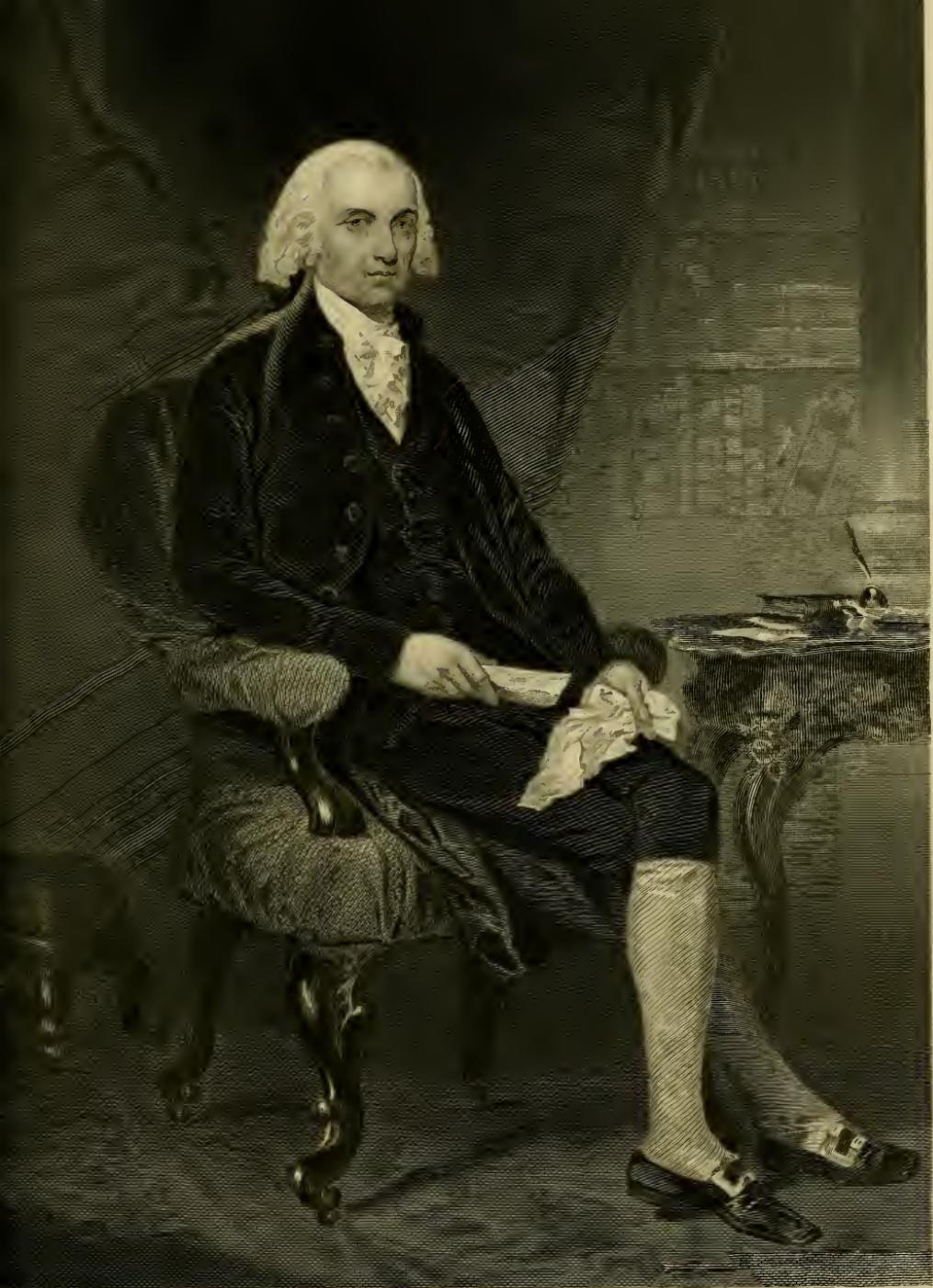
SPEECH IN THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, July 27, 1848<sup>1</sup>

*General Taylor and the Veto.*

MR. SPEAKER, our Democratic friends seem to be in great distress because they think our candidate for the presidency don't suit us. Most of them cannot find out that General Taylor has any principles at all; some, however, have discovered that he has one, but that one is entirely wrong. This one principle is his position on the veto power. The gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. Stanton] who has just taken his seat, indeed, has said there is very little, if any difference on this question between General Taylor and all the presidents; and he seems to think it sufficient detraction from General Taylor's position on it

<sup>1</sup> Though delivered in Congress this was practically a "stump speech" and presaged the enthusiasm with which Lincoln threw himself into the campaign for Taylor. It is the only one of Lincoln's popular speeches preserved entire of that period, and fairly embodies the manner and spirit of the politics of 1848. Reading it will convince one how effective the orator must have been as a canvasser in out of the way districts of his State where a political meeting was the greatest form of public entertainment.

that it has nothing new in it. But all others whom I have heard speak assail it furiously. A new member from Kentucky [Mr. Clark], of very considerable ability, was in particular concerned about it. He thought it altogether novel and unprecedented for a president or a presidential candidate to think of approving bills whose constitutionality may not be entirely clear to his own mind. He thinks the ark of our safety is gone unless presidents shall always veto such bills as in their judgment may be of doubtful constitutionality. However clear Congress may be on their authority to pass any particular act, the gentleman from Kentucky thinks the President must veto it if he has doubts about it. Now I have neither time nor inclination to argue with the gentleman on the veto power as an original question; but I wish to show that General Taylor, and not he, agrees with the earlier statesmen on this question. When the bill chartering the first Bank of the United States passed Congress, its constitutionality was questioned. Mr. Madison, then in the House of Representatives, as well as others, had opposed it on that ground. General Washington, as President, was called on to approve or reject it. He sought and obtained on the constitutionality question the separate written opinions of Jefferson, Hamilton, and Edmund Randolph,— they



James Madison

From the original picture by C. Wright in the possession of the author.



then being respectively Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, and Attorney-General. Hamilton's opinion was for the power; while Randolph's and Jefferson's were both against it. Mr. Jefferson, after giving his opinion deciding only against the constitutionality of the bill, closes his letter with the paragraph which I now read:

It must be admitted, however, that unless the President's mind, on a view of everything which is urged for and against this bill, is tolerably clear that it is unauthorized by the Constitution,—if the *pro* and *con*, hang so even as to balance his judgment,—a just respect for the wisdom of the legislature would naturally decide the balance in favor of their opinion. It is chiefly for cases where they are clearly misled by error, ambition, or interest, that the Constitution has placed a check in the negative of the President.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

February 15, 1791.

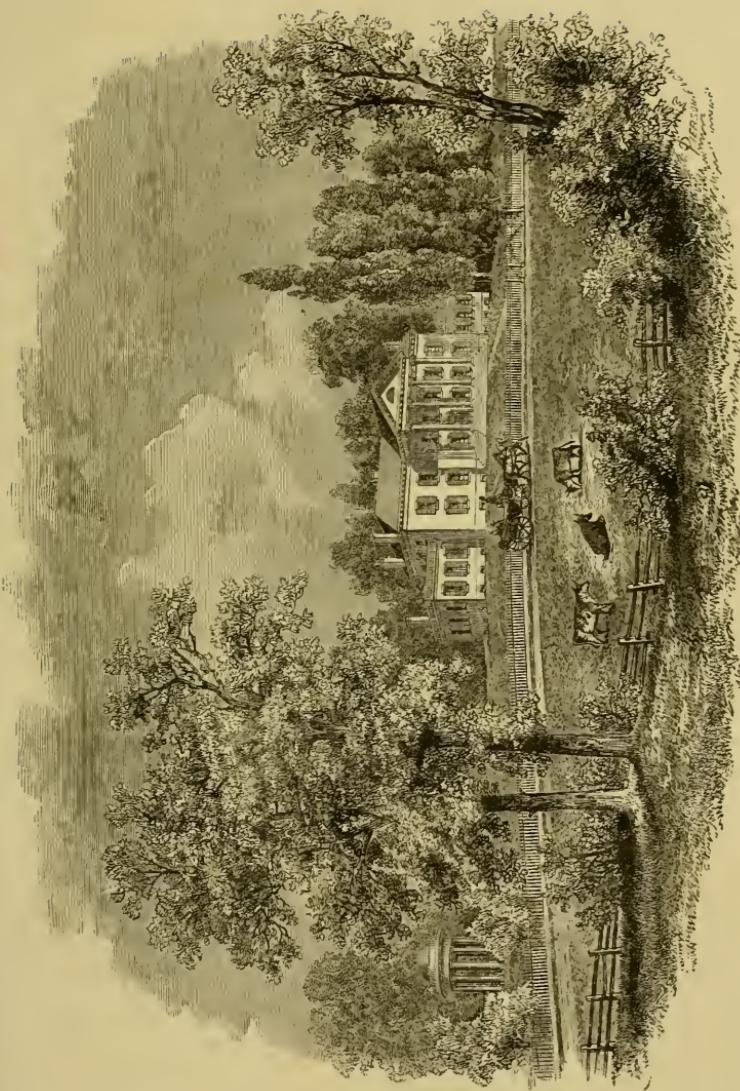
General Taylor's opinion, as expressed in his Allison letter, is as I now read:

The power given by the veto is a high conservative power; but, in my opinion, should never be exercised except in cases of clear violation of the Constitution, or manifest haste and want of consideration by Congress.

It is here seen that, in Mr. Jefferson's opinion, if on the constitutionality of any given bill the President doubts, he is not to veto it, as the gentleman from Kentucky would have him do, but is to defer to Congress and approve it. And if we compare the opinion of Jefferson and Taylor, as expressed in these paragraphs, we shall find them more exactly alike than we can often find any two expressions having any literal difference. None but interested faultfinders, I think, can discover any substantial variation.

*Taylor on Measures of Policy.*

But gentlemen on the other side are unanimously agreed that General Taylor has no other principles. They are in utter darkness as to his opinions on any of the questions of policy which occupy the public attention. But is there any doubt as to what he will do on the prominent questions if elected? Not the least. It is not possible to know what he will or would do in every imaginable case, because many questions have passed away, and others doubtless will arise which none of us have yet thought of; but on the prominent questions of currency, tariff, internal improvements, and Wilmot proviso, General Taylor's course is at least as well defined as is General Cass's. Why, in their eagerness to get at General Taylor, several Democratic



MONTPELIER—THE HOME OF PRESIDENT MADISON.



members here have desired to know whether, in case of his election, a bankrupt law is to be established. Can they tell us General Cass's opinion on this question? [Some member answered, "He is against it."] Aye, how do you know he is? There is nothing about it in the platform, nor elsewhere, that I have seen. If the gentleman knows of anything which I do not, he can show it. But to return. General Taylor, in his Allison letter, says:

Upon the subject of the tariff, the currency, the improvement of our great highways, rivers, lakes, and harbors, the will of the people, as expressed through their representatives in Congress, ought to be respected and carried out by the executive.

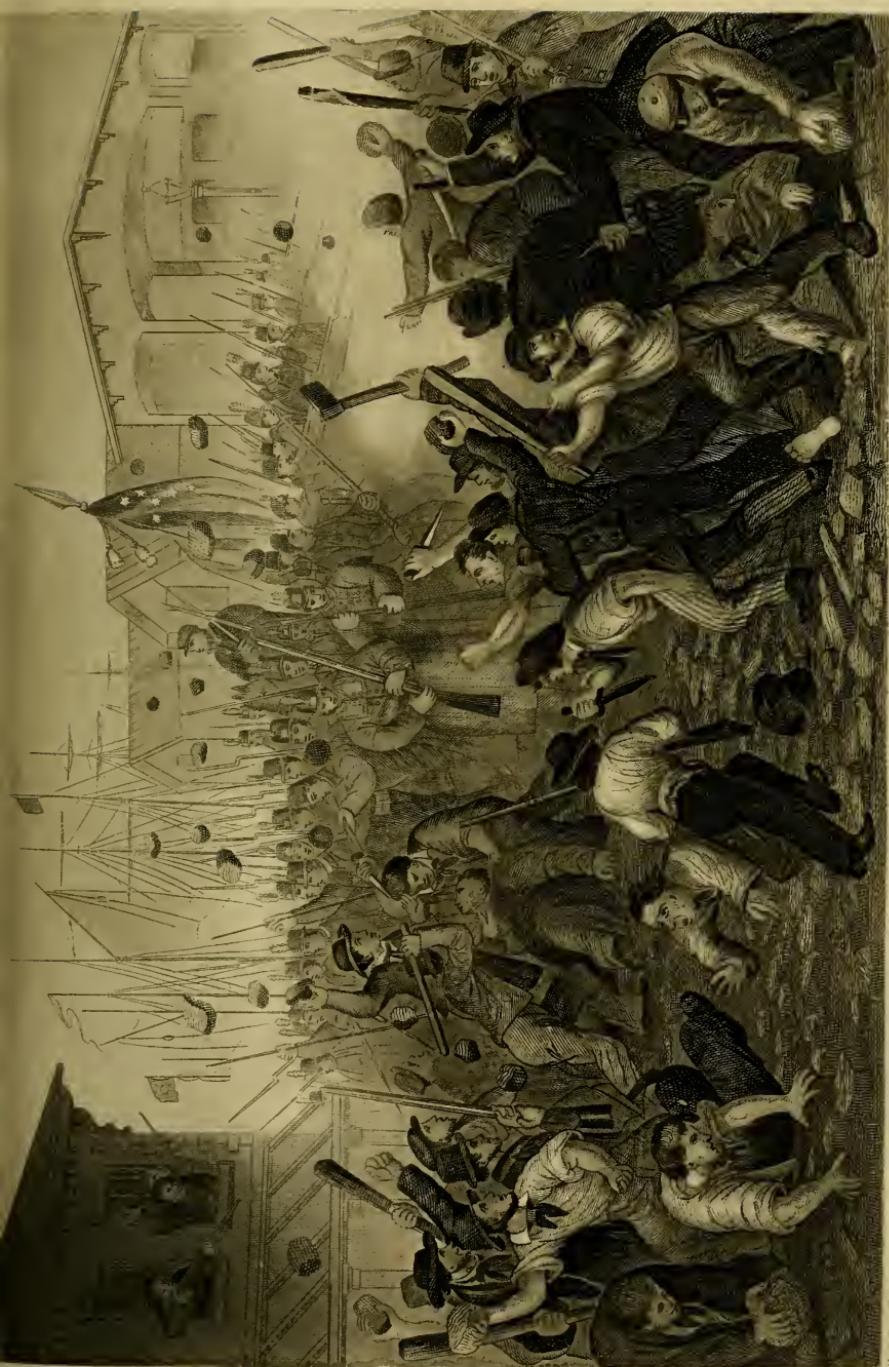
Now this is the whole matter. In substance, it is this. The people say to General Taylor, "If you are elected, shall we have a national bank?" He answers, "Your will, gentlemen, not mine." "What about the tariff?" "Say yourselves." "Shall our rivers and harbors be improved?" "Just as you please. If you desire a bank, an alteration of the tariff, internal improvements, any or all, I will not hinder you. If you do not desire them, I will not attempt to force them on you. Send up your members of Congress from the various districts, with opinions according to your own, and if they are for

these measures, or any of them, I shall have nothing to oppose; if they are not for them, I shall not, by any appliances whatever, attempt to dragoon them into their adoption." Now can there be any difficulty in understanding this? To you Democrats it may not seem like principle; but surely you cannot fail to perceive the position plainly enough. The distinction between it and the position of your candidate is broad and obvious; and I admit you have a clear right to show it is wrong if you can; but you have no right to pretend you cannot see it at all. We see it, and to us it appears like principle, and the best sort of principle at that—the principle of allowing the people to do as they please with their own business. My friend from Indiana [C. B. Smith] has aptly asked, "Are you willing to trust the people?" Some of you answered substantially, "We are willing to trust the people; but the President is as much the representative of the people as Congress." In a certain sense, and to a certain extent, he is the representative of the people. He is elected by them, as well as Congress is; but can he, in the nature of things, know the wants of the people as well as three hundred other men, coming from all the various localities of the nation? If so, where is the propriety of having a Congress? That the Constitution gives the President a negative on

legislation, all know; but that this negative should be so combined with platforms and other appliances as to enable him, and in fact almost compel him, to take the whole of legislation into his own hands, is what we object to, is what General Taylor objects to, and is what constitutes the broad distinction between you and us. To thus transfer legislation is clearly to take it from those who understand with minuteness the interests of the people, and give it to one who does not and cannot so well understand it. I understand your idea that if a presidential candidate avow his opinion upon a given question, or rather upon all questions, and the people, with full knowledge of this, elect him, they thereby distinctly approve all those opinions. By means of it, measures are adopted or rejected contrary to the wishes of the whole of one party, and often nearly half of the other. Three, four, or half a dozen questions are prominent at a given time; the party selects its candidate, and he takes his position on each of these questions. On all but one his positions have already been indorsed at former elections, and his party fully committed to them; but that one is new, and a large portion of them are against it. But what are they to do? The whole was strung together; and they must take all, or reject all. They cannot take what they like, and leave the rest. What they are

already committed to being the majority, they shut their eyes, and gulp the whole. Next election, still another is introduced in the same way. If we run our eyes along the line of the past, we shall see that almost if not quite all the articles of the present Democratic creed have been at first forced upon the party in this very way. And just now, and just so, opposition to internal improvements is to be established if General Cass shall be elected. Almost half the Democrats here are for improvements; but they will vote for Cass, and if he succeeds, their vote will have aided in closing the doors against improvements. Now this is a process which we think is wrong. We prefer a candidate who, like General Taylor, will allow the people to have their own way, regardless of his private opinions; and I should think the internal-improvement Democrats, at least ought to prefer such a candidate. He would force nothing on them which they don't want, and he would allow them to have improvements which their own candidate, if elected, will not.

Mr. Speaker, I have said General Taylor's position is as well defined as is that of General Cass. In saying this, I admit I do not certainly know what he would do on the Wilmot proviso. I am a Northern man, or rather a Western free-State man, with a constituency I believe



THE BATTLE OF BUNNELL'S BRIDGE, APRIL 19, 1865.

BY A. B. HARRIS.



to be, and with personal feelings I know to be, against the extension of slavery. As such, and with what information I have, I hope and believe General Taylor, if elected, would not veto the proviso. But I do not know it. Yet if I knew he would, I still would vote for him. I should do so because, in my judgment, his election alone can defeat General Cass; and because, should slavery thereby go to the territory we now have, just so much will certainly happen by the election of Cass, and, in addition a course of policy leading to new wars, new acquisitions of territory and still further extensions of slavery. One of the two is to be President. Which is preferable?

But there is as much doubt of Cass on improvements as there is of Taylor on the proviso. I have no doubt myself of General Cass on this question; but I know the Democrats differ among themselves as to his position. My internal-improvement colleague [Mr. Wentworth] stated on this floor the other day that he was satisfied Cass was for improvements, because he had voted for all the bills that he [Mr. Wentworth] had. So far so good. But Mr. Polk vetoed some of these very bills. The Baltimore convention passed a set of resolutions, among other things, approving these vetoes, and General Cass declares, in his letter accepting

the nomination, that he has carefully read these resolutions, and that he adheres to them as firmly as he approves them cordially. In other words, General Cass voted for the bills, and thinks the President did right to veto them; and his friends here are amiable enough to consider him as being on one side or the other, just as one or the other may correspond with their own respective inclinations. My colleague admits that the platform declares against the constitutionality of a general system of improvements; and that General Cass indorses the platform; but he still thinks General Cass is in favor of some sort of improvements. Well, what are they? As he is against general objects, those he is for must be particular and local. Now this is taking the subject precisely by the wrong end. Particularity—expending the money of the whole people for an object which will benefit only a portion of them—is the greatest real objection to improvements, and has been so held by General Jackson, Mr. Polk, and all others, I believe, till now. But now, behold, the objects most general—nearest free from this objection—are to be rejected, while those most liable to it are to be embraced. To return: I cannot help believing that General Cass, when he wrote his letter of acceptance, well understood he was to be claimed by the advocates of



Andrew Jackson



both sides of this question, and that he then closed the door against all further expressions of opinion purposely to retain the benefits of that double position. His subsequent equivocation at Cleveland, to my mind, proves such to have been the case.

One word more, and I shall have done with this branch of the subject. You Democrats, and your candidate, in the main are in favor of laying down in advance a platform—a set of party positions—as a unit, and then of forcing the people, by every sort of appliance, to ratify them, however unpalatable some of them may be. We and our candidate are in favor of making presidential elections, and the legislation of the country distinct matters; so that the people can elect whom they please, and afterward legislate just as they please, without any hindrance, save only so much as may guard against infractions of the Constitution, undue haste, and want of consideration. The difference between us is clear as noon-day. That we are right we cannot doubt. We hold the true Republican position. In leaving the people's business in their hands, we cannot be wrong. We are willing, and even anxious, to go to the people on this issue.

*Old Horses and Military Coat-tails.*

But I suppose I cannot reasonably hope to convince you that we have any principles. The most I can expect is to assure you that we think we have, and are quite contented with them. The other day one of the gentlemen from Georgia [Mr. Iverson], an eloquent man, and a man of learning, so far as I can judge, not being learned myself, came down upon us astonishingly. He spoke in what the "Baltimore American" calls the "scathing and withering style." At the end of his second severe flash I was struck blind, and found myself feeling with my fingers for an assurance of my continued existence. A little of the bone was left, and I gradually revived. He eulogized Mr. Clay in high and beautiful terms, and then declared that we had deserted all our principles, and had turned Henry Clay out, like an old horse, to root. This is terribly severe. It cannot be answered by argument—at least I cannot so answer it. I merely wish to ask the gentleman if the Whigs are the only party he can think of who sometimes turn old horses out to root. Is not a certain Martin Van Buren an old horse which your own party have turned out to root? and is he not rooting a little to your discomfort about now? But in not nominating Mr. Clay we deserted our principles, you say. Ah! In

what? Tell us, ye men of principle, what principle we violated. We say you did violate principle in discarding Van Buren, and we can tell you how. You violated the primary, the cardinal, the one great living principle of all democratic representative government—the principle that the representative is bound to carry out the known will of his constituents. A large majority of the Baltimore convention of 1844 were, by their constituents, instructed to procure Van Buren's nomination if they could. In violation—in utter glaring contempt—of this, you rejected him—rejected him, as the gentleman from New York [Mr. Birdsall] the other day expressly admitted, for availability—that same “general availability” which you charge upon us, and daily chew over here, as something exceedingly odious and unprincipled. But the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. Iverson] gave us a second speech yesterday, all well considered and put down in writing, in which Van Buren was scathed and withered a “few” for his present position and movements. I cannot remember the gentleman's precise language; but I do remember he put Van Buren down, down, till he got him where he was finally to “stink” and “rot.”

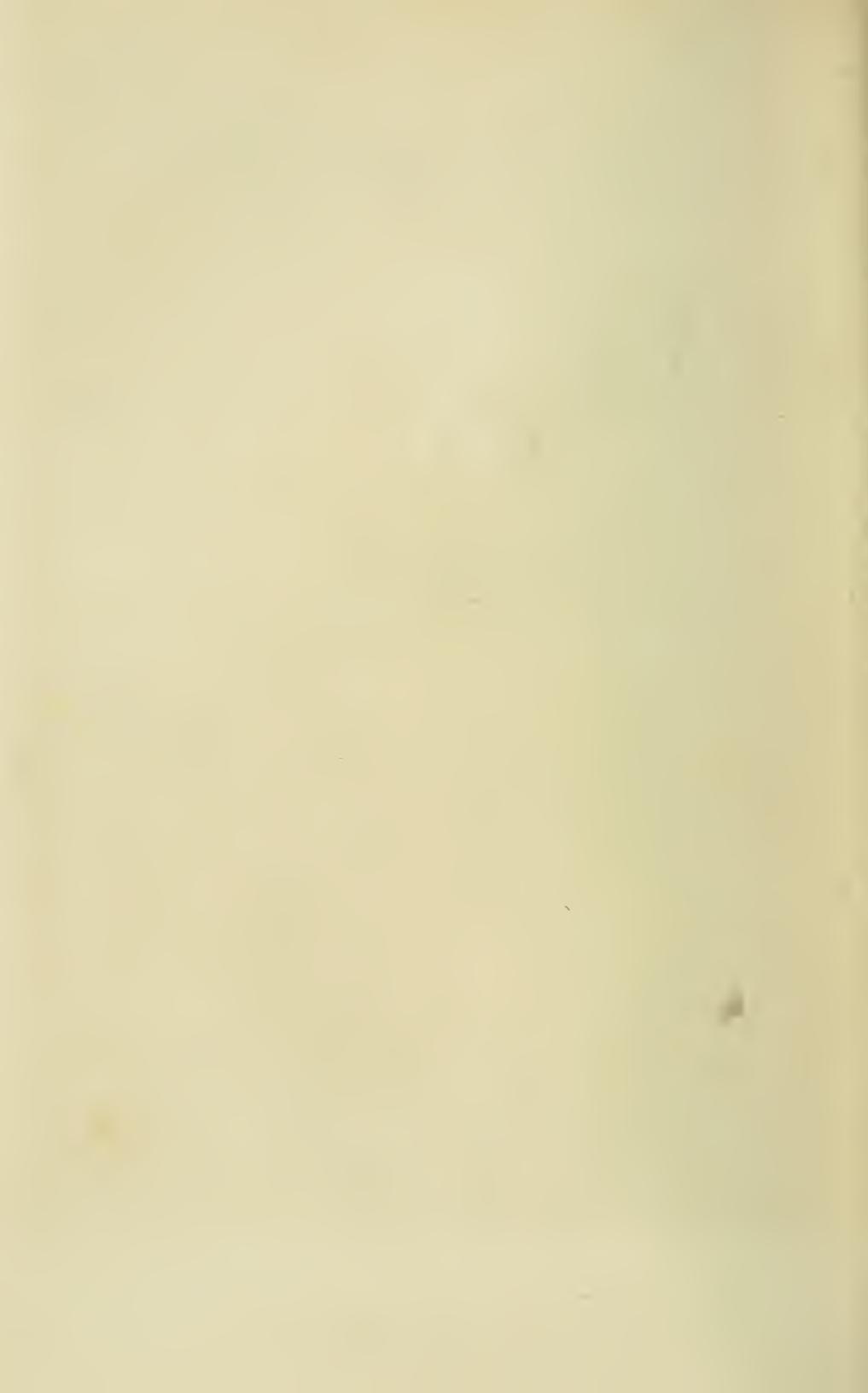
Mr. Speaker, it is no business or inclination of mine to defend Martin Van Buren in the war

of extermination now waging between him and his old admirers. I say, "Devil take the hindmost"—and the foremost. But there is no mistaking the origin of the breach; and if the curse of "stinking" and "rotting" is to fall on the first and greatest violators of principle in the matter, I disinterestedly suggest that the gentleman from Georgia and his present co-workers are bound to take it upon themselves. But the gentleman from Georgia further says we have deserted all our principles, and taken shelter under General Taylor's military coat-tail, and he seems to think this is exceedingly degrading. Well, as his faith is, so be it unto him. But can he remember no other military coat-tail under which a certain other party have been sheltering for near a quarter of a century? Has he no acquaintance with the ample military coat-tail of General Jackson? Does he not know that his own party have run the five last presidential races under that coat-tail? And that they are now running the sixth under the same cover? Yes, sir, that coat-tail was used not only for General Jackson himself, but has been clung to, with the grip of death, by every Democratic candidate since. You have never ventured, and dare not now venture, from under it. Your campaign papers have constantly been "Old Hickories," with rude likenesses of the old gen-



W. C. Brown

Engraved from a recent Photograph from life



eral upon them; hickory poles and hickory brooms your never-ending emblems; Mr. Polk himself was "Young Hickory," "Little Hickory," or something so; and even now your campaign paper here is proclaiming that Cass and Butler are of the true "Hickory stripe." Now, sir, you dare not give it up. Like a horde of hungry ticks you have stuck to the tail of the Hermitage lion to the end of his life; and you are still sticking to it, and drawing a loathsome sustenance from it, after he is dead. A fellow once advertised that he had made a discovery by which he could make a new man out of an old one, and have enough of the stuff left to make a little yellow dog. Just such a discovery has General Jackson's popularity been to you. You not only twice made President of him out of it, but you have had enough of the stuff left to make Presidents of several comparatively small men since; and it is your chief reliance now to make still another.

Mr. Speaker, old horses and military coat-tails, or tails of any sort, are not figures of speech such as I would be the first to introduce into discussions here; but as the gentleman from Georgia has thought fit to introduce them, he and you are welcome to all you have made, or can make by them. If you have any more old horses, trot them out; any more tails, just cock

them and come at us. I repeat, I would not introduce this mode of discussion here; but I wish gentlemen on the other side to understand that the use of degrading figures is a game at which they may not find themselves able to take all the winnings. ["We give it up!"] Aye, you give it up, and well you may; but for a very different reason from that which you would have us understand. The point—the power to hurt—of all figures consists in the truthfulness of their application; and, understanding this, you may well give it up. They are weapons which hit you, but miss us.

*Military Tail of the Great Michigander.*

But in my hurry I was very near closing this subject of military tails before I was done with it. There is one entire article of the sort I have not discussed yet,—I mean the military tail you Democrats are now engaged in dovetailing into the great Michigander. Yes, sir; all his biographies (and they are legion) have him in hand, tying him to a military tail, like so many mischievous boys tying a dog to a bladder of beans. True the material they have is very limited, but they drive at it might and main. He invaded Canada without resistance, and he *outvaded* it without pursuit. As he did both under orders, I suppose there was to him neither credit

nor discredit in them; but they constitute a large part of the tail. He was not at Hull's surrender, but he was close by; he was volunteer aid to General Harrison on the day of the battle of the Thames; and as you said in 1840 Harrison was picking huckleberries two miles off while the battle was fought, I suppose it is a just conclusion with you to say Cass was aiding Harrison to pick huckleberries. This is about all, except the mooted question of the broken sword. Some authors say he broke it, some say he threw it away, and some others, who ought to know, say nothing about it. Perhaps it would be a fair historical compromise to say, if he did not break it, he did not do anything else with it.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, did you know I am a military hero? Yes, sir; in the days of the Black Hawk war I fought, bled, and came away. Speaking of General Cass's career reminds me of my own. I was not at Stillman's defeat, but I was about as near it as Cass was to Hull's surrender; and, like him, I saw the place very soon afterward. It is quite certain I did not break my sword, for I had none to break; but I bent a musket pretty badly on one occasion. If Cass broke his sword, the idea is he broke it in desperation; I bent the musket by accident. If General Cass went in advance of me in picking huckleberries, I guess I surpassed him in charges

upon the wild onions. If he saw any live, fighting Indians, it was more than I did; but I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes, and although I never fainted from the loss of blood, I can truly say I was often very hungry. Mr. Speaker, if I should ever conclude to doff whatever our Democratic friends may suppose there is of black-cockade federalism about me, and therefore they shall take me up as their candidate for the presidency, I protest they shall not make fun of me, as they have of General Cass, by attempting to write me into a military hero.

*Cass on the Wilmot Proviso.*

While I have General Cass in hand, I wish to say a word about his political principles. As a specimen, I take the record of his progress in the Wilmot proviso. In the Washington "Union" of March 2, 1847, there is a report of a speech of General Cass, made the day before in the Senate, on the Wilmot proviso, during the delivery of which Mr. Miller of New Jersey is reported to have interrupted him as follows, to-wit:

Mr. Miller expressed his great surprise at the change in the sentiments of the senator from Michigan, who had been regarded as the great champion of freedom in the Northwest, of which he was a dis-



James K. Polk

"

From the original painting by George C. Smillie, 1845.

Johnson, Fry & Co., Publishers, New York.



tinguished ornament. Last year the senator from Michigan was understood to be decidedly in favor of the Wilmot proviso; and as no reason had been stated for the change, he [Mr. Miller] could not refrain from the expression of his extreme surprise.

To this General Cass is reported to have replied as follows, to-wit:

Mr. Cass said that the course of the senator from New Jerey was most extraordinary. Last year he [Mr. Cass] should have voted for the proposition, had it come up. But circumstances had altogether changed. The honorable senator then read several passages from the remarks, as given above, which he had committed to writing, in order to refute such a charge as that of the senator from New Jersey.

In the "remarks above reduced to writing" is one numbered four, as follows, to-wit:

Fourth. Legislation now would be wholly inoperative, because no territory hereafter to be acquired can be governed without an act of Congress providing for its government; and such an act, on its passage, would open the whole subject, and leave the Congress called on to pass it free to exercise its own discretion, entirely uncontrolled by any declaration found on the statute-book.

In "Niles's Register," Vol. LXXIII., p. 293, there is a letter of General Cass to —— Nich-

olson, of Nashville, Tennessee, dated December 24, 1847, from which the following are correct extracts:

The Wilmot proviso has been before the country some time. It has been repeatedly discussed in Congress and by the public press. I am strongly impressed with the opinion that a great change has been going on in the public mind upon this subject—in my own as well as others'—and that doubts are resolving themselves into convictions that the principle it involves should be kept out of the national legislature, and left to the people of the confederacy in their respective local governments. . . . Briefly, then, I am opposed to the exercise of any jurisdiction by Congress over this matter; and I am in favor of leaving the people of any territory which may be hereafter acquired the right to regulate it themselves, under the general principles of the Constitution. Because—

First. I do not see in the Constitution any grant of the requisite power to Congress; and I am not disposed to extend a doubtful precedent beyond its necessity—the establishment of territorial governments when needed—leaving to the inhabitants all the right compatible with the relations they bear to the confederation.

These extracts show that in 1846 General Cass was for the proviso at once; that in March, 1847, he was still for it, but not just then; and that in

December, 1847, he was against it altogether. This is a true index to the whole man. When the question was raised in 1846, he was in a blustering hurry to take ground for it. He sought to be in advance, and to avoid the uninteresting position of a mere follower; but soon he began to see glimpses of the great Democratic ox-goad waving in his face, and to hear indistinctly a voice saying, "Back! Back, sir! Back a little!" He shakes his head, and bats his eyes, and blunders back to his position of March, 1847; but still the goad waves, and the voice grows more distinct and sharper still, "Back, sir! Back, I say! Further back!"—and back he goes to the position of December, 1847, at which the goad is still, and the voice soothingly says, "So! Stand at that!"

Have no fears, gentlemen, of your candidate. He exactly suits you, and we congratulate you upon it. However much you may be distressed about our candidate, you have all cause to be contented and happy with your own. If elected, he may not maintain all, or even any of his positions previously taken; but he will be sure to do whatever the party exigency for the time being may require; and that is precisely what you want. He and Van Buren are the same "manner of men"; and, like Van Buren, he will never desert you till you first desert him.

*Cass on Working and Eating.*

Mr. Speaker, I adopt the suggestion of a friend, that General Cass is a general of splendidly successful charges—charges to be sure, not upon the public enemy, but upon the public treasury. He was Governor of Michigan Territory, and ex-officio Superintendent of Indian Affairs, from the 9th of October, 1813, till the 31st of July, 1831—a period of seventeen years, nine months, and twenty-two days. During this period he received from the United States treasury, for personal services and personal expenses, the aggregate sum of ninety-six thousand and twenty-eight dollars, being an average of fourteen dollars and seventy-nine cents per day for every day of the time. This large sum was reached by assuming that he was doing service at several different places, and in several different capacities in the same place, all at the same time. By a correct analysis of his accounts during that period, the following propositions may be deduced:

First. He was paid in three different capacities during the whole of the time; that is to say—(1) As governor's salary at the rate per year of \$2,000. (2) As estimated for office, rent, clerk hire, fuel, etc., in superintendence of Indian affairs *in Michigan*, at the rate per year of \$1,500. (3) As compensation and expenses for



*Leopold*  
from the original painting by Chappel in the possession of the artist.

Johnson Fry & Co. Publishers. New York.



various miscellaneous items of Indian service *out of Michigan*, an average per year of \$625.

Second. During part of the time—that is, from the 9th of October, 1813, to the 29th of May, 1822—he was paid in four different capacities; that is to say, the three as above, and, in addition thereto, the commutation of ten rations per day, amounting per year to \$730.

Third. During another part of the time—that is, from the beginning of 1822 to the 31st of July, 1831—he was also paid in four different capacities; that is to say, the first three, as above (the rations being dropped after the 29th of May, 1822), and, in addition thereto, for superintending Indian Agencies at Piqua, Ohio; Fort Wayne, Indiana; and Chicago, Illinois, at the rate per year of \$1,500. It should be observed here that the last item, commencing at the beginning of 1822, and the item of rations, ending on the 29th of May, 1822, lap on each other during so much of the time as lies between those two dates.

Fourth. Still another part of the time—that is, from the 31st of October, 1821, to the 29th of May, 1822—he was paid in six different capacities; that is to say, the three first, as above; the item of rations, as above; and, in addition thereto, another item of ten rations per day while at Washington settling his accounts, being

at the rate per year of \$730; and also an allowance for expenses traveling to and from Washington, and while there, of \$1,022, being at the rate per year of \$1,793.

Fifth. And yet during the little portion of the time which lies between the 1st of January, 1822, and the 29th of May, 1822, he was paid in seven different capacities; that is to say, the six last mentioned, and also, at the rate of \$1,500 per year, for the Piqua, Fort Wayne, and Chicago service, as mentioned above.

These accounts have already been discussed some here; but when we are amongst them, as when we are in the Patent Office, we must peep about a good deal before we can see all the curiosities. I shall not be tedious with them. As to the large item of \$1,500 per year—amounting in the aggregate to \$26,715—for office rent, clerk hire, fuel, etc., I barely wish to remark that so far as I can discover in the public documents, there is no evidence, by word or inference, either from any disinterested witness or of General Cass himself, that he ever rented or kept a separate office, ever hired or kept a clerk, or even used any extra amount of fuel, etc., in consequence of his Indian services. Indeed, General Cass's entire silence in regard to these items, in his two long letters urging his claims upon the government, is, to my mind, almost conclu-

sive that no such claims had any real existence.

But I have introduced General Cass's accounts here chiefly to show the wonderful physical capacities of the man. They show that he not only did the labor of several men at the same time, but that he often did it at several places, many hundreds of miles apart, at the same time. And at eating, too, his capacities are shown to be quite as wonderful. From October, 1821, to May, 1822, he eat ten rations a day in Michigan, ten rations a day here in Washington, and near five dollars' worth a day on the road between the two places! And then there is an important discovery in his example—the art of being paid for what one eats, instead of having to pay for it. Hereafter if any nice young man should owe a bill which he cannot pay in any other way, he can just board it out. Mr. Speaker, we have all heard of the animal standing in doubt between two stacks of hay and starving to death. The like of that would never happen to General Cass. Place the stacks a thousand miles apart, he would stand stock-still midway between them, and eat them both at once, and the green grass along the line would be apt to suffer some, too, at the same time. By all means make him President, gentlemen. He will feed you bounteously—if—if there is any left after he shall have helped himself.

*The Whigs and the War.*

But, as General Taylor is *par excellence*, the hero of the Mexican War, and as you Democrats say we Whigs have always opposed the war, you think it must be very awkward and embarrassing for us to go for General Taylor. The declaration that we have always opposed the war is true or false, according as one may understand the term "oppose the war." If to say "the war was unnecessarily and unconstitutionally commenced by the President" be opposing the war, then the Whigs have very generally opposed it. Whenever they have spoken at all, they have said this; and they have said it on what has appeared good reason to them. The marching an army into the midst of a peaceful Mexican settlement, frightening the inhabitants away, leaving their growing crops and other property to destruction, to you may appear a perfectly amiable, peaceful, unprovoking procedure; but it does not appear so to us. So to call such an act, to us appears no other than a naked, impudent absurdity, and we speak of it accordingly. But if, when the war had begun, and had become the cause of the country, the giving of our money and our blood, in common with yours, was support of the war, then it is not true that we have always opposed the war. With few individual exceptions, you have constantly had





*David Webster*

our votes here for all the necessary supplies. And, more than this, you have had the services, the blood, and the lives of our political brethren in every trial and on every field. The beardless boy and the mature man, the humble and the distinguished—you have had them. Through suffering and death, by disease and in battle, they have endured and fought and fell with you. Clay and Webster each gave a son, never to be returned. From the State of my own residence, besides other worthy but less known Whig names, we sent Marshall, Morrison, Baker, and Hardin; they all fought, and one fell, and in the fall of that one we lost our best Whig man. Nor were the Whigs few in number, or laggard in the day of danger. In that fearful, bloody, breathless struggle at Buena Vista, where each man's hard task was to beat back five foes or die himself, of the five high officers who perished, four were Whigs.

In speaking of this, I mean no odious comparison between the lion-hearted Whigs and the Democrats who fought there. On other occasions, and among the lower officers and privates on that occasion, I doubt not the proportion was different. I wish to do justice to all. I think of all those brave men as Americans, in whose proud fame, as an American, I too have a share. Many of them, Whigs and Democrats,

are my constituents and personal friends; and I thank them—more than thank them—one and all, for the high imperishable honor they have conferred on our common State.

But the distinction between the cause of the President in beginning the war, and the cause of the country after it was begun, is a distinction which you cannot perceive. To you the President and the country seem to be all one. You are interested to see no distinction between them; and I venture to suggest that probably your interest blinds you a little. We see the distinction, as we think, clearly enough; and our friends who have fought in the war have no difficulty in seeing it also. What those who have fallen would say, were they alive and here, of course we can never know; but with those who have returned there is no difficulty. Colonel Haskell and Major Gaines, members here, both fought in the war, and one of them underwent extraordinary perils and hardships; still they, like all other Whigs here, vote, on the record, that the war was unnecessarily and unconstitutionally commenced by the President. And even General Taylor himself, the noblest Roman of them all, has declared that as a citizen, and particularly as a soldier, it is sufficient for him to know that his country is at war with a foreign nation, to do all in his power to bring it



J. Marshall

CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE UNITED STATES



to a speedy and honorable termination by the most vigorous and energetic operations, without inquiry about its justice, or anything else connected with it.

Mr. Speaker, let our Democratic friends be comforted with the assurance that we are content with our position, content with our company, and content with our candidate; and that although they, in their generous sympathy, think we ought to be miserable, we really are not, and that they may dismiss the great anxiety they have on our account.

Mr. Speaker, I see I have but three minutes left, and this forces me to throw out one whole branch of my subject. A single word on still another. The Democrats are keen enough to frequently remind us that we have some dissensions in our ranks. Our good friend from Baltimore immediately before me [Mr. McLane] expressed some doubt the other day as to which branch of our party General Taylor would ultimately fall into the hands of. That was a new idea to me. I knew we had dissenters, but I did not know they were trying to get our candidate away from us. I would like to say a word to our dissenters, but I have not the time. Some such we certainly have; have you none, gentlemen Democrats? Is it all union and harmony in your ranks? no bickerings? no divisions? If

there be doubt as to which of our divisions will get our candidate, is there no doubt as to which of your candidates will get your party?

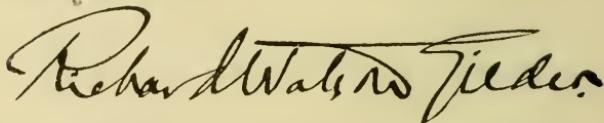
*Divided Gangs of Hogs!*

I have heard some things from New York; and if they are true, one might well say of your party there, as a drunken fellow once said when he heard the reading of an indictment for hog-stealing. The clerk read on till he got to and through the words, "did steal, take, and carry away ten boars, ten sows, ten shoats, and ten pigs," at which he exclaimed, "Well, by golly, that is the most equally divided gang of hogs I ever did hear of!" If there is any other gang of hogs more equally divided than the Democrats of New York are about this time, I have not heard of it.

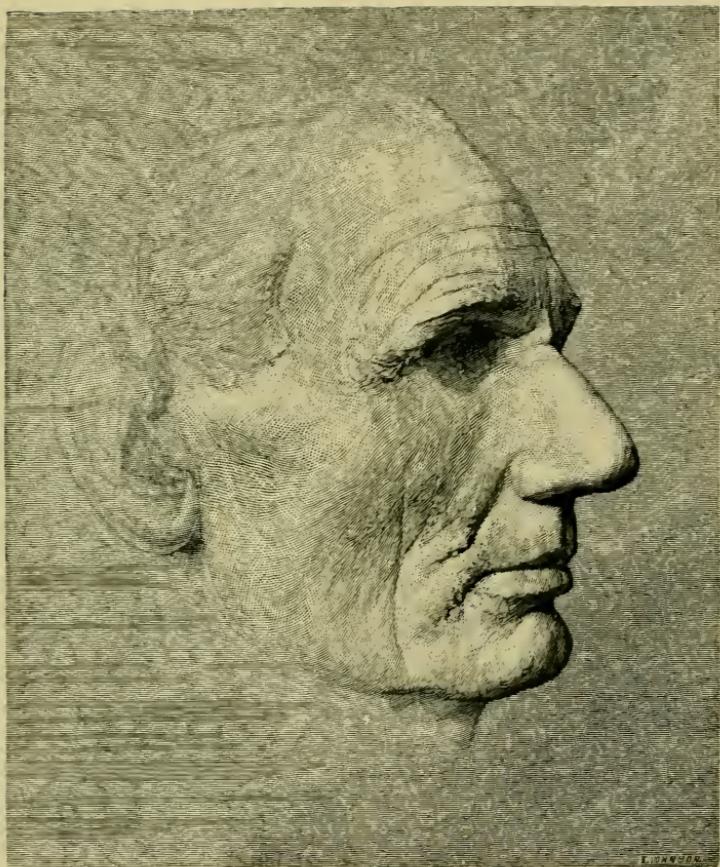
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## The Life-Mask of Abraham Lincoln

This bronze doth keep the very form and mold  
Of our great martyr's face. Yes, this is he;  
That brow all wisdom, all benignity;  
That human, humorous mouth; those cheeks that  
hold  
Like some harsh landscape all the summer's gold;  
That spirit fit for sorrow, as the sea  
For storms to beat on; the lone agony  
Those silent, patient lips too well foretold.  
Yes, this is he who ruled a world of men  
As might some prophet of the elder day—  
Brooding above the tempest and the fray  
With deep-eyed thought and more than mortal ken.  
A power was his beyond the touch of art  
Or armed strength—his pure and mighty heart.

A large, flowing cursive signature in black ink. The signature reads "Richard Watson Gilder" and is written in a single, continuous, elegant stroke.

*Wood Engraving by Thomas Johnson from the  
Original Life-Mask made by Leonard W. Volk  
in 1860.*





\*REPORT OF SPEECH DELIVERED AT WORCESTER,  
MASS., on Sept. 12, 1848<sup>1</sup>

*From the Boston "Advertiser."*

**M**R. KELLOGG then introduced to the meeting the Hon. Abraham Lincoln, Whig member of Congress from Illinois, a representative of *free soil*.

Mr. Lincoln has a very tall and thin figure, with an intellectual face, showing a searching mind, and a cool judgment. He spoke in a clear and cool, and very eloquent manner, for an hour and a half, carrying the audience with him in his able arguments and brilliant illustrations—only interrupted by warm and frequent applause. He began by expressing a real feeling of modesty in addressing an audience "this side of the mountains," a part of the country where, in the opinion of the people of his section, everybody was supposed to be instructed

<sup>1</sup> It is to be regretted that none of Lincoln's speeches, made in his canvass of New England in 1848, are preserved as actually delivered. He spoke in Boston, Cambridge, Dorchester, Chelsea and other places. Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., states that the most brilliant of these speeches was the one delivered at Worcester, the report of which is given here.

and wise. But he had devoted his attention to the question of the coming presidential election, and was not unwilling to exchange with all whom he might the ideas to which he had arrived. He then began to show the fallacy of some of the arguments against General Taylor, making his chief theme the fashionable statement of all those who oppose him ("the old Locofocos as well as the new"), that he *has no principles*, and that the Whig party have abandoned their principles by adopting him as their candidate. He maintained that General Taylor occupied a high and unexceptionable Whig ground, and took for his first instance and proof of this statement in the Allison letter—with regard to the Bank, Tariff, Rivers and Harbors, etc.—that the will of the people should produce its own results, without Executive influence. The principle that the people should do what —under the constitution—they please, is a Whig principle. All that General Taylor is not only to consent, but to appeal to the people to judge and act for themselves. And this was no new doctrine for Whigs. It was the "platform" on which they had fought all their battles, the resistance of Executive influence, and the principle of enabling the people to frame the government according to their will. General Taylor consents to be the candidate, and to assist



NO. 11. ST. MARY'S CHURCH, LIVERPOOL.





the people to do what they think to be their duty, and think to be best in their natural affairs, but because *he don't want to tell what we ought to do*, he is accused of having no principles. The Whigs have maintained for years that neither the influence, the duress, or the prohibition of the Executive should control the legitimately expressed will of the people; and now that on that very ground, General Taylor says that he should use the power given him by the people to do, to the best of his judgment, the will of the people, he is accused of want of principle, and of inconsistency in position.

Mr. Lincoln proceeded to examine the absurdity of an attempt to make a platform or creed for a national party, to *all* parts of which *all* must consent and agree, when it was clearly the intention and the true philosophy of our government, that in Congress all opinions and principles should be represented, and that when the wisdom of all had been compared and united, the will of the majority should be carried out. On this ground he conceived (and the audience seemed to go with him) that General Taylor held correct, sound republican principles.

Mr. Lincoln then passed to the subject of slavery in the states, saying that the people of Illinois agreed entirely with the people of Massachusetts on this subject, except perhaps that

they did not keep so constantly thinking about it. All agreed that slavery was an evil, but that we were not responsible for it and cannot affect it in states of this Union where we do not live. But, the question of the *extension* of slavery to new territories of this country, is a part of our responsibility and care, and is under our control. In opposition to this Mr. L. believed that the self-named "Free Soil" party, was far behind the Whigs. Both parties opposed the extension. As he understood it the new party had no principle except this opposition. If their platform held any other, it was in such a general way that it was like the pair of pantaloons the Yankee pedlar offered for sale, "large enough for any man, small enough for any boy." They therefore had taken a position calculated to break down their single important declared object. They were working for the election of either General Cass or General Taylor. The speaker then went on to show, clearly and eloquently, the danger of extension of slavery, likely to result from the election of General Cass. To unite with those who annexed the new territory to prevent the extension of slavery in that territory seemed to him to be in the highest degree absurd and ridiculous. Suppose these gentlemen succeed in electing Mr. Van Buren, they had no specific means to *prevent* the extension

of slavery to New Mexico and California, and General Taylor, he confidently believed, would not encourage it, and would not prohibit its restriction. But if General Cass was elected, he felt certain that the plans of farther extension of territory would be encouraged, and those of the extension of slavery would meet no check. The "Free Soil" men in claiming that name indirectly attempt a deception, by implying that Whigs were *not* Free Soil men. In declaring that they would "do their duty and leave the consequences to God," merely gave an excuse for taking a course they were not able to maintain by a fair and full argument. To make this declaration did not show what their duty was. If it did we should have no use for judgment, we might as well be made without intellect, and when divine or human law does not clearly point out what *is* our duty, we have no means of finding out what it is by using our most intelligent judgment of the consequences. If there were divine law, or human law for voting for Martin Van Buren, or if a fair examination of the consequences and first reasoning would show that voting for him would bring about the ends they pretended to wish—then he would give up the argument. But since there was no fixed law on the subject, and since the whole probable result of their action would be an assis-

tance in electing General Cass, he must say that they were behind the Whigs in their advocacy of the freedom of the soil.

Mr. Lincoln proceeded to rally the Buffalo Convention for forbearing to say anything—after all the previous declarations of those members who were formerly Whigs—on the subject of the Mexican war, because the Van Burens had been known to have supported it. He declared that of all the parties asking the confidence of the country, this new one had *less* of principle than any other.

He wondered whether it was still the opinion of these Free Soil gentlemen as declared in the “whereas” at Buffalo, that the Whig and Democratic parties were both entirely dissolved and absorbed into their own body. Had the *Vermont election* given them any light? They had calculated on making as great an impression in that State as in any part of the Union, and there their attempts had been wholly ineffectual. Their failure there was a greater success than they would find in any other part of the Union.

Mr. Lincoln went on to say that he honestly believed that all those who wished to keep up the character of the Union; who did not believe in enlarging our field, but in keeping our fences where they are and cultivating our present possessions, making it a garden, improving the

morals and education of the people; devoting the administrations to this purpose; all real Whigs, friends of good honest government;—the race was ours. He had opportunities of hearing from almost every part of the Union from reliable sources and had not heard of a country in which we had not received accessions from other parties. If the true Whigs come forward and join these new friends, they need not have a doubt. We had a candidate whose personal character and principles he had already described, whom he could not eulogize if he would. General Taylor had been constantly, perseveringly, quietly standing up, *doing his duty*, and asking no praise or reward for it. He was and must be just the man to whom the interests, principles and prosperity of the country might be safely intrusted. He had never failed in anything he had undertaken, although many of his duties had been considered almost impossible.

Mr. Lincoln then went into a terse though rapid review of the origin of the Mexican war and the connection of the administration and General Taylor with it, from which he deduced a strong appeal to the Whigs present to do their duty in the support of General Taylor, and closed with the warmest aspirations for and confidence in a deserved success.

At the close of this truly masterly and convincing speech, the audience gave three enthusiastic cheers for Illinois, and three more for the eloquent Whig member from that State.

### LETTER TO THOMAS LINCOLN

WASHINGTON, December 24, 1848.

*My Dear Father:* Your letter of the 7th was received night before last. I very cheerfully send you the twenty dollars, which sum you say is necessary to save your land from sale. It is singular that you should have forgotten a judgment against you; and it is more singular that the plaintiff should have let you forget it so long, particularly as I suppose you always had property enough to satisfy a judgment of that amount. Before you pay it, it would be well to be sure you have not paid, or at least that you cannot prove that you have paid it.

Give my love to mother and all the connections. Affectionately your son,

A. LINCOLN.

### BILL TO ABOLISH SLAVERY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, January 16, 1849

On January 16, 1849, Mr. Lincoln moved the following amendment in the House of Representatives in Congress, instructing the proper

committee to report a bill for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, with the consent of the voters of the District, and with compensation to owners:

*Resolved*, That the Committee on the District of Columbia be instructed to report a bill in substance as follows:

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled, That no person not now within the District of Columbia, nor now owned by any person or persons now resident within it, nor hereafter born within it, shall ever be held in slavery within said District.

Sec. 2. That no person now within said District, or now owned by any person or persons now resident within the same, or hereafter born within it, shall ever be held in slavery without the limits of said District: Provided, That officers of the Government of the United States, being citizens of the slaveholding States, coming into said District on public business, and remaining only so long as may be reasonably necessary for that object, may be attended into and out of said District, and while there, by the necessary servants of themselves and their families, without their right to hold such servants in service being thereby impaired.

Sec. 3. That all children born of slave mothers within said District, on or after the first day of January, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and

fifty, shall be free; but shall be reasonably supported and educated by the respective owners of their mothers, or by their heirs or representatives, and shall owe reasonable service as apprentices to such owners, heirs, or representatives, until they respectively arrive at the age of —— years, when they shall be entirely free; and the municipal authorities of Washington and Georgetown, within their respective jurisdictional limits, are hereby empowered and required to make all suitable and necessary provision for enforcing obedience to this section, on the part of both masters and apprentices.

Sec. 4. That all persons now within this District, lawfully held as slaves, or now owned by any person or persons now resident within said District, shall remain such at the will of their respective owners, their heirs, and legal representatives: Provided, That such owner, or his legal representative, may at any time receive from the Treasury of the United States the full value of his or her slave, of the class in this section mentioned, upon which such slave shall be forthwith and forever free: And provided further, That the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of the Treasury shall be a board for determining the value of such slaves as their owners may desire to emancipate under this section, and whose duty it shall be to hold a session for the purpose on the first Monday of each calendar month, to receive all applications, and, on satisfactory evidence in each case that the person presented for valuation is a slave, and of

the class in this section mentioned, and is owned by the applicant, shall value such slave at his or her full cash value, and give to the applicant an order on the Treasury for the amount, and also to such slave a certificate of freedom.

Sec. 5. That the municipal authorities of Washington and Georgetown, within their respective jurisdictional limits, are hereby empowered and required to provide active and efficient means to arrest and deliver up to their owners all fugitive slaves escaping into said District.

Sec. 6. That the election officers within said District of Columbia are hereby empowered and required to open polls, at all the usual places of holding elections, on the first Monday of April next, and receive the vote of every free white male citizen above the age of twenty-one years, having resided within said District for the period of one year or more next preceding the time of such voting for or against this act, to proceed in taking said votes, in all respects not herein specified, as at elections under the municipal laws, and with as little delay as possible to transmit correct statements of the votes so cast to the President of the United States; and it shall be the duty of the President to canvass said votes immediately, and if a majority of them be found to be for this act, to forthwith issue his proclamation giving notice of the fact; and this act shall only be in full force and effect on and after the day of such proclamation.

Sec. 7. That involuntary servitude for the pun-

ishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall in no wise be prohibited by this act.

Sec. 8. That for all the purposes of this act, the jurisdictional limits of Washington are extended to all parts of the District of Columbia not now included within the present limits of Georgetown.

### LETTER TO WILLIAM SCHOULER

WASHINGTON, February 2, 1849.

*Friend Schouler:* In these days of Cabinet making, we out West are awake as well as others. The accompanying article is from the "Illinois Journal," our leading Whig paper; and while it expresses what all the Whigs of the legislatures of Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin have expressed—a preference for Colonel Baker—I think it is fair and magnanimous to the other Western aspirants; and, on the whole, shows by sound argument that the West is not only entitled to, but is in need of, one member of the Cabinet. Desiring to turn public attention in some measure to this point, I shall be obliged if you will give the article a place in your paper, with or without comments, according to your own sense of propriety.

Our acquaintance, though short, has been very cordial, and I therefore venture to hope you will not consider my request presumptuous, whether

you shall or shall not think proper to grant it. This I intend as private and confidential.

Yours truly, A. LINCOLN.

REMARKS IN THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES, February 13, 1849.

*On the Bill Granting Lands to the States to  
Make Railroads and Canals.*

Mr. Lincoln said he had not risen for the purpose of making a speech, but only for the purpose of meeting some of the objections to the bill. If he understood those objections, the first was that if the bill were to become a law, it would be used to lock large portions of the public lands from sale, without at least affecting the ostensible object of the bill—the construction of railroads in the new States; and secondly, that Congress would be forced to the abandonment of large portions of the public lands to the States for which they might be reserved, without their paying for them. This he understood to be the substance of the objections of the gentleman from Ohio to the passage of the bill.

If he could get the attention of the House for a few minutes, he would ask gentlemen to tell us what motive could induce any State legislature, or individual, or company of indi-

viduals, of the new States, to expend money in surveying roads which they might know they could not make? [A voice: They are not required to make the road.]

Mr. Lincoln continued: That was not the case he was making. What motive would tempt any set of men to go into an extensive survey of a railroad which they did not intend to make? What good would it do? Did men act without motive? Did business men commonly go into an expenditure of money which could be of no account to them? He generally found that men who have money were disposed to hold on to it, unless they could see something to be made by its investment. He could not see what motive of advantage to the new States could be subserved by merely keeping the public lands out of market, and preventing their settlement. As far as he could see, the new States were wholly without any motive to do such a thing. This, then, he took to be a good answer to the first objection.

In relation to the fact assumed, that after a while, the new States having got hold of the public lands to a certain extent, they would turn round and compel Congress to relinquish all claim to them, he had a word to say, by way of recurring to the history of the past. When was the time to come (he asked) when the States in

which the public lands were situated would compose a majority of the representation in Congress, or anything like it? A majority of Representatives would very soon reside west of the mountains, he admitted; but would they all come from States in which the public lands were situated? They certainly would not; for, as these Western States grew strong in Congress, the public lands passed away from them, and they got on the other side of the question; and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Vinton] was an example attesting that fact.

Mr. Vinton interrupted here to say that he had stood on this question just where he was now, for five and twenty years.

Mr. Lincoln was not making an argument for the purpose of convicting the gentleman of any impropriety at all. He was speaking of a fact in history, of which his State was an example. He was referring to a plain principle in the nature of things. The State of Ohio had now grown to be a giant. She had a large delegation on that floor; but was she now in favor of granting lands to the new States, as she used to be? The New England States, New York, and the Old Thirteen were all rather quiet upon the subject; and it was seen just now that a member from one of the new States was the first man to rise up in opposition. And so it would be

with the history of this question for the future. There never would come a time when the people residing in the States embracing the public lands would have the entire control of this subject; and so it was a matter of certainty that Congress would never do more in this respect than what would be dictated by a just liberality. The apprehension, therefore, that the public lands were in danger of being wrested from the General Government by the strength of the delegation in Congress from the new States, was utterly futile. There never could be such a thing. If we take these lands (said he) it will not be without your consent. We can never outnumber you. The result is that all fear of the new States turning against the right of Congress to the public domain must be effectually quelled, as those who are opposed to that interest must always hold a vast majority here, and they will never surrender the whole or any part of the public lands unless they themselves choose to do so. That was all he desired to say.

## LETTER TO JOSHUA F. SPEED

February 20, 1849.

*My Dear Speed: . . . I am flattered to learn that Mr. Crittenden has any recollection of me which is not unfavorable; and for the manifestation of your kindness toward me I sin-*

cerely thank you. Still there is nothing about me to authorize me to think of a first-class office, and a second-class one would not compensate my being sneered at by others who want it for themselves. I believe that, so far as the Whigs in Congress are concerned, I could have the General Land Office almost by common consent; but then Sweet and Don Morrison and Browning and Cyrus Edwards all want it, and what is worse, while I think I could easily take it myself, I fear I shall have trouble to get it for any other man in Illinois. The reason is that Mc-  
Gaughey, an Indiana ex-member of Congress, is here after it, and being personally known, he will be hard to beat by any one who is not. . . .

## LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

WASHINGTON, March 9, 1849.

Hon. Secretary of the Treasury.

*Dear Sir:* Colonel E. D. Baker and myself are the only Whig members of Congress from Illinois—I of the Thirtieth, and he of the Thirty-first. We have reason to think the Whigs of that State hold us responsible, to some extent, for the appointments which may be made of our citizens. We do not know you personally; and our efforts to see you have, so far, been unavailing. I therefore hope I am not obtru-

sive in saying in this way, for him and myself, that when a citizen of Illinois is to be appointed in your department, to an office either in or out of the State, we most respectfully ask to be heard. Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

WASHINGTON, March 10, 1849.

Hon. Secretary of State.

*Sir:* There are several applicants for the office of United States Marshal for the District of Illinois, among the most prominent of whom are Benjamin Bond, Esq., of Carlyle, and — Thomas, Esq., of Galena. Mr. Bond I know to be personally every way worthy of the office; and he is very numerously and most respectfully recommended. His papers I send to you; and I solicit for his claims a full and fair consideration.

Having said this much, I add that in my individual judgment the appointment of Mr. Thomas would be the better.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

(Indorsed on Mr. Bond's papers.)

In this and the accompanying envelop are the recommendations of about two hundred good citizens of all parts of Illinois, that Benjamin

Bond be appointed marshal for that district. They include the names of nearly all our Whigs who now are, or have ever been, members of the State legislature, besides forty-six of the Democratic members of the present legislature, and many other good citizens. I add that from personal knowledge I consider Mr. Bond every way worthy of the office, and qualified to fill it. Holding the individual opinion that the appointment of a different gentleman would be better, I ask especial attention and consideration for his claims, and for the opinions expressed in his favor by those over whom I can claim no superiority.

A. LINCOLN.

LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, April 7, 1849.

Hon. Secretary of the Home Department.

*Dear Sir:* I recommend that Walter Davis be appointed Receiver of the Land Office at this place, whenever there shall be a vacancy. I cannot say that Mr. Herndon, the present incumbent, has failed in the proper discharge of any of the duties of the office. He is a very warm partizan, and openly and actively opposed to the election of General Taylor. I also understand that since General Taylor's election, he has received a reappointment from Mr. Polk,

his old commission not having expired. Whether this is true the records of the Department will show. I may add that the Whigs here almost universally desire his removal.

I give no opinion of my own, but state the facts, and express the hope that the Department will act in this as in all other cases on some proper general rule.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

P. S. The land district to which this office belongs is very nearly if not entirely within my district; so that Colonel Baker, the other Whig representative, claims no voice in the appointment.

A. L.

#### LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, April 7, 1849.

Hon. Secretary of the Home Department.

*Dear Sir:* I recommend that Turner R. King, now of Pekin, Illinois, be appointed Register of the Land Office at this place whenever there shall be a vacancy.

I do not know that Mr. Barret, the present incumbent, has failed in the proper discharge of any of his duties in the office. He is a decided partizan, and openly and actively opposed the election of General Taylor. I understand, too, that since the election of General Taylor, Mr.

Principal Surveyor of any County within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

THIS shall be your WARRANT to Survey and lay off in one or more Surveyors, for John Ham and John Ham his Heirs or Assigns, the Quantity of four hundred and six acres of land, due unto the said John Ham and John Ham and his Heirs and Assigns, in Consideration of the Sum of one hundred and fifty £ and six pence current Money paid into the publick Treasury; the Paymant whereof to the Treasurer hath been duly certified by the Auditors of publick Accounts, and their Certificate received into the Land Office. GIVI<sup>N</sup> under my Hand, and the Seal of the said Office, on this fourth Day of March in the Year One Hundred and Seventy Eight.

Paris 01.11.01.0



Barret has received a reappointment from Mr. Polk, his old commission not having expired. Whether this be true, the records of the Department will show.

Whether he should be removed I give no opinion, but merely express the wish that the Department may act upon some proper general rule, and that Mr. Barret's case may not be made an exception to it.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

P. S. The land district to which this office belongs is very nearly if not entirely within my district; so that Colonel Baker, the other Whig representative, claims no voice in the appointment.

A. L.

#### LETTER TO THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, April 7, 1849.

Hon. Postmaster-General.

*Dear Sir:* I recommend that Abner Y. Ellis be appointed postmaster at this place, whenever there shall be a vacancy. J. R. Diller, the present incumbent, I cannot say has failed in the proper discharge of any of the duties of the office. He, however, has been an active partisan in opposition to us.

Located at the seat of government of the State, he has been, for part if not the whole of the

time he has held the office, a member of the Democratic State Central Committee, signing his name to their addresses and manifestos; and has been, as I understand, reappointed by Mr. Polk since General Taylor's election. These are the facts of the case as I understand them, and I give no opinion of mine as to whether he should or should not be removed. My wish is that the Department may adopt some proper general rule for such cases, and that Mr. Diller may not be made an exception to it, one way or the other. Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

P. S. This office, with its delivery, is entirely within my district; so that Colonel Baker, the other Whig representative, claims no voice in the appointment.

L.

#### LETTER TO W. B. WARREN AND OTHERS<sup>1</sup>

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, April 7, 1849.

*Gentlemen:* In answer to your note concerning the General Land Office I have to say that, if the office could be secured to Illinois by my

<sup>1</sup> Early in 1849, after the dispassionate recommendation of a number of individuals for various offices under the new government, Lincoln was petitioned by a half-dozen leading Whigs of the State, asking him to become an applicant for the place of Commissioner of the General Land Office. For the first and only time in his life he became an applicant for an appointment at the hands of the President. Fortunately he failed to obtain

consent to accept it, and not otherwise, I give that consent. Some months since I gave my word to secure the appointment to that office of Mr. Cyrus Edwards, if in my power, in case of a vacancy; and more recently I stipulated with Colonel Baker that if Mr. Edwards and Colonel J. L. D. Morrison could arrange with each other for one of them to withdraw, we would jointly recommend the other. In relation to these pledges, I must not only be chaste, but above suspicion. If the office shall be tendered to me, I must be permitted to say: "Give it to Mr. Edwards or, if so agreed by them, to Colonel Morrison, and I decline it; if not, I accept." With this understanding you are at liberty to procure me the offer of the appointment if you can; and I shall feel complimented by your effort, and still more by its success. It should not be overlooked that Colonel Baker's position entitles him to a large share of control in this matter; however, one of your number, Colonel Warren, knows that Baker has at all times been ready to recommend me, if I would consent. It must also be understood that if at any time previous to an appointment being made I shall learn that Mr. Edwards and Colonel Morrison have

the office, Justin Butterfield being the successful candidate. Later on in life Lincoln congratulated himself on escaping the pitfall.

agreed, I shall at once carry out my stipulation with Colonel Baker as above stated.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, April 7, 1849.

Hon. Secretary of the Home Department.

*Dear Sir:* I recommend that William Butler be appointed Pension Agent for the Illinois agency, when the place shall be vacant. Mr. Hurst, the present incumbent, I believe has performed the duties very well. He is a decided partizan, and, I believe, expects to be removed. Whether he shall, I submit to the Department. This office is not confined to my district, but pertains to the whole State; so that Colonel Baker has an equal right with myself to be heard concerning it.

However, the office is located here; and I think it is not probable that any one would desire to remove from a distance to take it.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

## LETTER TO — THOMPSON

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, April 25, 1849.

*Dear Thompson:* A tirade is still kept up against me here for recommending T. R. King. This morning it is openly avowed that my supposed influence at Washington shall be broken down generally, and King's prospects defeated in particular. Now, what I have done in this matter I have done at the request of you and some other friends in Tazewell; and I therefore ask you to either admit it is wrong, or come forward and sustain me. If the truth will permit, I propose that you sustain me in the following manner: copy the inclosed scrap in your own handwriting, and get everybody (not three or four, but three or four hundred) to sign it, and then send it to me. Also have six, eight, or ten of our best-known Whig friends there to write me individual letters, stating the truth in this matter as they understand it. Don't neglect or delay in the matter. I understand information of an indictment having been found against him about three years ago, for gaming or keeping a gaming-house, has been sent to the Department. I shall try to take care of it at the Department till your action can be had and forwarded on.

Yours, as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

## LETTER TO J. M. LUCAS

SPRINGFIELD, April 25, 1849.

J. M. LUCAS, ESQ.

*Dear Sir:* Your letter of the 15th is just received. Like you, I fear the Land Office is not going as it should; but I know nothing I can do. In my letter written three days ago, I told you the Department understands my wishes. As to Butterfield, he is my personal friend, and is qualified to do the duties of the office; but of the quite one hundred Illinoisans equally well qualified, I do not know one with less claims to it. In the first place, what you say about Lisle Smith is the first intimation I have had of any one man in Illinois desiring Butterfield to have any office. Now, I think if anything be given the State, it should be so given as to gratify our friends, and to stimulate them to future exertions. As to Mr. Clay having recommended him, that is *quid pro quo*. He fought for Mr. Clay against General Taylor to the bitter end, as I understand; and I do not believe I misunderstand. Lisle Smith, too, was a Clay delegate at Philadelphia, and against my most earnest entreaties took the lead in filling two vacancies from my own district with Clay men. It will now mortify me deeply if General Tay-

lor's administration shall trample all my wishes in the dust merely to gratify these men.

Yours, as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

INDORSEMENT CONCERNING ORVILLE PADDOCK,

May [1?], 1849

I have already recommended W. S. Wallace for Pension Agent at this place. It is, however, due the truth to say that Orville Paddock, above recommended, is every way qualified for the office, and that the persons recommending him are of our business men and best Whig citizens.

LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, May 10, 1849.

Hon. Secretary of the Interior.

*Dear Sir:* I regret troubling you so often in relation to the land offices here, but I hope you will perceive the necessity of it, and excuse me. On the 7th of April I wrote you recommending Turner R. King for Register, and Walter Davis for Receiver. Subsequently I wrote you that, for a private reason, I had concluded to transpose them. That private reason was the request of an old personal friend who himself desired to be Receiver, but whom I felt it my duty to

refuse a recommendation. He said if I would transpose King and Davis he would be satisfied. I thought it a whim, but, anxious to oblige him, I consented. Immediately he commenced an assault upon King's character, intending, as I suppose, to defeat his appointment, and thereby secure another chance for himself. This double offense of bad faith to me and slander upon a good man is so totally outrageous that I now ask to have King and Davis placed as I originally recommended,—that is, King for Register and Davis for Receiver.

An effort is being made now to have Mr. Barret, the present Register, retained. I have already said he has done the duties of the office well, and I now add he is a gentleman in the true sense. Still, he submits to be the instrument of his party to injure us. His high character enables him to do it more effectually. Last year he presided at the convention which nominated the Democratic candidate for Congress in this district, and afterward ran for the State Senate himself, not desiring the seat, but avowedly to aid and strengthen his party. He made speech after speech with a degree of fierceness and coarseness against General Taylor not quite consistent with his habitually gentlemanly deportment. At least one (and I think more) of those who are now trying to have him retained

was himself an applicant for this very office, and, failing to get my recommendation, now takes this turn.

In writing you a third time in relation to these offices, I stated that I supposed charges had been forwarded to you against King, and that I would inquire into the truth of them. I now send you herewith what I suppose will be an ample defense against any such charges. I ask attention to all the papers, but particularly to the letters of Mr. David Mack, and the paper with the long list of names. There is no mistake about King's being a good man. After the unjust assault upon him, and considering the just claims of Tazewell County, as indicated in the letters I inclose you, it would in my opinion be injustice, and withal a blunder, not to appoint him, at least as soon as any one is appointed to either of the offices here.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

## LETTER TO DUFF GREEN

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, May 18, 1849.

EAR GENERAL: I learn from Washington that a man by the name of Butterfield will probably be appointed Commissioner of the General Land Office. This ought not to be. That is about the only crumb of patronage which Illinois expects; and I am sure the mass of General Taylor's friends here would quite as lief see it go east of the Alleghanies, or west of the Rocky Mountains, as into that man's hands. They are already sore on the subject of his getting office. In the great contest of 1840 he was not seen or heard of; but when the victory came, three or four old drones, including him, got all the valuable offices, through what influence no one has yet been able to tell. I believe the only time he has been very active was last spring a year ago, in opposition to General Taylor's nomination.

Now, cannot you get the ear of General Taylor? Ewing is for Butterfield, and therefore he must be avoided. Preston, I think, will favor you. Mr. Edwards has written me offering to decline, but I advised him not to do so. Some

kind friends think I ought to be an applicant, but I am for Mr. Edwards. Try to defeat Butterfield, and in doing so use Mr. Edwards, J. L. D. Morrison, or myself, whichever you can to best advantage. Write me, and let this be confidential.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

#### \*LETTER TO JOSEPH GILLESPIE

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., May 19, 1849.

*Dear Gillespie:* Butterfield will be Commissioner of the Gen'l Land Office, unless prevented by strong and speedy efforts. Ewing is for him, and he is only not appointed yet because Old Zach. hangs fire. I have reliable information of this. Now, if you agree with me that his appointment would dissatisfy rather than gratify the Whigs of this State, that it would slacken their energies in future contests, that his appointment in '41 is an old sore with them which they will not patiently have reopened,—in a word that his appointment now would be a fatal blunder to the administration and our political men, here in Illinois, write Mr. Crittenden to that effect. He can control the matter. Were you to write Ewing I fear the President would never hear of your letter. This may be a mere suspicion. You might [write] directly to Old Zach. You will be the best judge of the pro-

priety of that. Not a moment's time is to be lost.

Let this [be] confidential except with Mr. Edwards and a few others whom you know I would trust just as I do you.

Yours as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

\*APPLICATION FOR A PATENT [May 22, 1849?]<sup>1</sup>

What I claim as my invention, and desire to secure by letters patent, is the combination of expandible buoyant chambers placed at the sides of a vessel with the main shaft or shafts by means of the sliding spars, which pass down through the buoyant chambers and are made fast to their bottoms and the series of ropes and pulleys or their equivalents in such a manner that by turning the main shaft or shafts in one direction the buoyant chambers will be forced downwards into the water, and at the same time expanded and filled with air for buoying up

<sup>1</sup> The invention that Lincoln patented was an improvement for lifting vessels over shoals. The inscription above the model in the Patent Office states it was patented by Lincoln, May 22, 1849. The apparatus consists of a bellows on either side of the hull of a craft just below the water line which is controlled by a simple and unique system of pulleys. These air repositories are intended to buoy up the vessels when in danger of grounding on reef or other obstruction. The model is about eighteen or twenty inches in length and appears to have been whittled out of a shingle and a cigar box.

the vessel by the displacement of water, and by turning the shafts in an opposite direction the buoyant chambers will be contracted into a small space and secured against injury.

A. LINCOLN

### LETTER TO E. EMBREE

*Confidential.*

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, May 25, 1849.

HON. E. EMBREE.

Dear Sir: I am about to ask a favor of you,—one which I hope will not cost you much. I understand the General Land Office is about to be given to Illinois, and that Mr. Ewing desires Justin Butterfield, of Chicago, to be the man. I give you my word, the appointment of Mr. Butterfield will be an egregious political blunder. It will give offense to the whole Whig party here, and be worse than a dead loss to the administration of so much of its patronage. Now, if you can conscientiously do so, I wish you to write General Taylor at once, saying that either I, or the man I recommend, should in your opinion be appointed to that office, if any one from Illinois shall be. I restrict my request to Illinois because you may have a man from your own State, and I do not ask to interfere with that.

Your friend as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

## \*LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., June 3, 1849.

Hon. Secretary of Interior.

*Dear Sir:* Vandalia, the Receiver's office at which place is the subject of the within, is not in my district; and I have been much perplexed to express any preference between Dr. Stapp and Mr. Remann. If any one man is better qualified for such an office than all others, Dr. Stapp is that man; still, I believe a large majority of the Whigs of the District prefer Mr. Remann, who also is a good man. Perhaps the papers on file will enable you to judge better than I can. The writers of the within are good men, residing within the Land District.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

## LETTER TO WILLIAM H. HERNDON

SPRINGFIELD, June 5, 1849.

*Dear William:* Your two letters were received last night. I have a great many letters to write, and so cannot write very long ones. There must be some mistake about Walter Davis saying I promised him the post-office. I did not so promise him. I did tell him that if the distribution of the offices should fall into my hands, he should have something; and if I

shall be convinced he has said any more than this, I shall be disappointed. I said this much to him because, as I understand, he is of good character, is one of the *young* men, is of the mechanics, and always faithful and never troublesome; a Whig, and is poor, with the support of a widow mother thrown almost exclusively on him by the death of his brother. If these are wrong reasons, then I have been wrong; but I have certainly not been selfish in it, because in my greatest need of friends he was against me, and for Baker.

Yours as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

P. S. Let the above be confidential.

#### LETTER ASKING A RECOMMENDATION

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, June 5, 1849.

NOTE.—In the files are a considerable number of replies transmitting indorsements, and reporting information on the progress of the contest between Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Justin Butterfield for this appointment.—N. and H.

*Dear Sir:* Would you as soon I should have the General Land Office as any other Illinoisan? If you would, write me to that effect at Washington, where I shall be soon. No time to lose.

Yours in haste,

A. LINCOLN.

## LETTER TO NATHANIEL POPE

SPRINGFIELD, June 8, 1849.

HON. N. POPE.

*Dear Sir:* I do not know that it would, but I can well enough conceive it might, embarrass you to now give a letter recommending me for the General Land Office. Could you not, however, without embarrassment or any impropriety, so far vindicate the truth of history as to briefly state to me, in a letter, what you did say to me last spring, on my arrival here from Washington, in relation to my becoming an applicant for that office? Having at last concluded to be an applicant, I have thought it is perhaps due me to be enabled to show the influences which brought me to the conclusion, and of which influences the wishes and opinions you expressed were not the least.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

## \*LETTER TO JOSEPH GILLESPIE

SPRINGFIELD, July 13, 1849.

J. GILLESPIE.

*Dear Gillespie:* Mr. Edwards is unquestionably offended with me in connection with the matter of the General Land Office. He wrote



LINCOLN IN 1864 AGE 55



a letter against me which was filed at the Department.

The better part of one's life consists of his friendships; and, of them, mine with Mr. Edwards was one of the most cherished. I have not been false to it. At a word I could have had the office any time before the Department was committed to Mr. Butterfield,—at least Mr. Ewing and the President say as much. That word I forbore to speak, partly for other reasons, but chiefly for Mr. Edwards' sake,—losing the office that he might gain it, I was always for; but to lose his *friendship*, by the effort for him, would oppress me very much, were I not sustained by the utmost consciousness of rectitude. I first determined to be an applicant, unconditionally, on the 2nd of June; and I did so then upon being informed by a Telegraphic despatch that the question was narrowed down to Mr. B— and myself, and that the Cabinet had postponed the appointment, three weeks, for my benefit. Not doubting that Mr. Edwards was wholly out of the question I, nevertheless, would not then have become an applicant had I supposed he would thereby be brought to suspect me of treachery to him. Two or three days afterward a conversation with Levi Davis convinced me Mr. Edwards was dissatisfied; but I was then too far in to get out. His own letter,

written on the 25th of April, after I had fully informed him of all that had passed up to within a few days of that time, gave assurance I had that entire confidence from him, which I felt my uniform and strong friendship for him entitled me to. Among other things it says "whatever course your judgment may dictate as proper to be pursued, shall never be excepted to by me." I also had had a letter from Washington, saying Chambers, of the Republic, had brought a rumor then, that Mr. E— had declined in my favor, which rumor I judged came from Mr. E— himself, as I had not then breathed of his letter to any living creature. In saying I had never, before the 22nd of June, determined to be an applicant, *unconditionally*, I mean to admit that, before then, I had said substantially I would take the office rather than it should be lost to the State, or given to one in the State whom the Whigs did not want; but I aver that in every instance in which I spoke of myself, I intended to keep, and now believe I did keep, Mr. E— above myself. Mr. Edwards' first suspicion was that I had allowed Baker to over-reach me, as his friend, in behalf of Don Morrison. I knew this was a mistake; and the result has proved it. I understand his view now is, that if I had gone to open war with Baker I could have ridden him down, and had the

thing all my own way. I believe no such thing. With Baker and some strong man from the Military tract, and elsewhere for Morrison; and we and some strong man from the Wabash and elsewhere for Mr. E—, it was not possible for either to succeed. I *believed* this in March, and I *know* it now. The only thing which gave either any chance was the very thing Baker and I proposed,—an adjustment with themselves.

You may wish to know how Butterfield finally beat me. I cannot tell you particulars, now, but will, when I see you. In the meantime let it be understood I am not greatly dissatisfied,—I wish the offer had been so bestowed as to encourage our friends in future contests, and I regret exceedingly Mr. Edwards' feelings towards me. These two things away, I should have no regrets,—at least I think I would not.

Write me soon.

Your friend, as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

RESOLUTIONS OF SYMPATHY WITH THE CAUSE  
OF HUNGARIAN FREEDOM, September [12?],  
1849

At a meeting to express sympathy with the cause of Hungarian Freedom, Dr. Todd, Thos. Lewis, Hon. A. Lincoln, and Wm. Carpenter were appointed a committee to present appro-

priate resolutions, which reported through Hon. A. Lincoln the following:

*Resolved*, That in their present glorious struggle for liberty, the Hungarians command our highest admiration and have our warmest sympathy.

*Resolved*, That they have our most ardent prayers for their speedy triumph and final success.

*Resolved*, That the Government of the United States should acknowledge the independence of Hungary as a nation of freemen at the very earliest moment consistent with our amicable relations with the government against which they are contending.

*Resolved*, That in the opinion of this meeting, the immediate acknowledgment of the independence of Hungary by our government is due from American freemen to their struggling brethren, to the general cause of republican liberty, and not violative of the just rights of any nation or people.

#### \*LETTER TO DR. WILLIAM FITHIAN

SPRINGFIELD, Sept. 14, 1849.

*Dear Doctor:* Your letter of the 9th was received a day or two ago. The notes and mortgages you enclosed me were duly received. I

also got the original Blanchard mortgage from Antrim Campbell, with whom Blanchard had left it for you. I got a decree of foreclosure on the whole; but owing to there being no redemption on the sale to be under the Blanchard mortgage, the court allowed Mobley till the first of March to pay the money, before advertising for sale. Stuart was empowered by Mobley to appear for him, and I had to take such decree as he would consent to, or none at all. I cast the matter about in my mind and concluded that as I could not get a decree now would put the accrued interest at interest, and thereby more than match the fact of throwing the Blanchard debt back from 12 to 6 per cent., it was better to do it. This is the present state of the case.

I can well enough understand and appreciate your suggestions about the Land Office at Danville; but in my present condition, I can do nothing.

Yours, as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

#### LETTER TO JOHN ADDISON

SPRINGFIELD ILLINOIS, September 27, 1849.

John Addison, Esq.

*My dear Sir:* Your letter is received. I can not but be grateful to you and all other friends who have interested themselves in having the governorship of Oregon offered to me; but on

as much reflection as I have had time to give the subject, I cannot consent to accept it. I have an ever abiding wish to serve you; but as to the secretaryship, I have already recommended our friend Simeon Francis, of the "Journal." Please present my respects to G. T. M. Davis generally, and my thanks especially for his kindness in the Oregon matter.

Yours as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

\*LETTER TO J. M. CLAYTON

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, September 27, 1849.

Hon. J. M. Clayton, Secretary of State.

*Dear Sir:* Your letter of the 17th inst., saying you had received no answer to yours informing me of my appointment as Secretary of Oregon, is received, and surprises me very much. I received that letter, accompanied by the commission, in due course of mail, and answered it two days after, declining the office, and warmly recommending Simeon Francis for it. I have also written you several letters since alluding to the same matter, all of which ought to have reached you before the date of your last letter.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE "CHICAGO JOURNAL"

SPRINGFIELD, November 21, 1849.

Editor of the "Chicago Journal."

*Dear Sir:* Some person, probably yourself, has sent me the number of your paper containing an extract of a supposed speech of Mr. Linder, together with your editorial comments. As my name is mentioned both in the speech and in the comments, and as my attention is directed to the article by a special mark in the paper sent me, it is perhaps expected that I should take some notice of it. I have to say, then, that I was absent from before the commencement till after the close of the late session of the legislature, and that the fact of such a speech having been delivered never came to my knowledge till I saw a notice of your article in the "Illinois Journal," one day before your paper reached me. Had the intention of any Whig to deliver such a speech been known to me, I should, to the utmost of my ability, have endeavored to prevent it. When Mr. Butterfield was appointed Commissioner of the Land Office, I expected him to be an able and faithful officer, and nothing has since come to my knowledge disappointing that expectation. As to Mr. Ewing, his

position has been one of great difficulty. I believe him, too, to be an able and faithful officer. A more intimate acquaintance with him would probably change the views of most of those who have complained of him.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

In the Illinois legislature, Mr. Linder said:

. . . . He should speak not as a disappointed politician, but as an independent working Whig, who had never applied for an office in his life; and the individual of whom he desired to speak was the Hon. Thomas Ewing, of Ohio, minister of the Home Department,—a man who was unsuited to wield the immense patronage placed in his hands, from the fact that he was hostile to all that was popular, having no sympathies with the people, and the people no sympathies with him; the man who disposed of the offices and honors at his disposal more like a prince than the minister and servant of a republican people. I speak plainly, sir, for I want what I say to be published, that it may reach the individual for whom it is intended,—the man who could disregard the almost unanimous wish of the people—the Whig people of Illinois,—and overlook the claims of such men as Lincoln, Edwards, and Morrison, and appoint a man known as an anti-war federalist of 1812, and one who avails himself of every opportunity to express his contempt of the people—a man who could not, as against any one of his

competitors, have obtained one twentieth of the votes of Illinois. (I refer, sir, to Justin Butterfield, Commissioner of the General Land Office.) Such a man as Ewing has no right to rule the cabinet of a republican president. He is universally odious, and stinks in the nostrils of the nation. He is as a lump of ice, an unfeeling, unsympathizing aristocrat, a rough, impious, uncouth, and unamiable man. Such a minister, in a four years' administration, would ruin the popularity of forty presidents and as many heroes. Sir, is it wonderful that the popular elections are turning against us? I am not at all surprised at it. If General Taylor retains him two years longer in his cabinet, he will find himself without a corporal's guard in the popular branch of our national legislature.

LETTER TO —

SPRINGFIELD, December 15, 1849.

*Dear Sir:* On my return from Kentucky, I found your letter of the 7th of November, and have delayed answering it till now, for the reason I now briefly state. From the beginning of our acquaintance I have felt the greatest kindness for you, and had supposed it was reciprocated on your part. Last summer, under circumstances which I mentioned to you, I was painfully constrained to withhold a recommendation which you desired, and shortly afterward I learned, in such a way as to believe it,

that you were indulging in open abuse of me. Of course my feelings were wounded. On receiving your last letter, the question occurred whether you were attempting to use me at the same time you would injure me, or whether you might not have been misrepresented to me. If the former, I ought not to answer you; if the latter, I ought; and so I have remained in suspense. I now inclose you the letter, which you may use if you see fit. Yours, etc.,

A. LINCOLN.

\*LETTER TO O. H. BROWNING

SPRINGFIELD, January 29, 1850.

*Dear Browning:* Yours of the 26th was received last night. As you anticipate, I had already recommended Judge Logan for District Judge; and more, I had already said all I could consistently with this, in favor of Judge Lockwood. I certainly esteem Mr. Bushnell as being every way worthy of such an office. In moral character, and legal attainments, he is entirely sound and sufficient. If you think this letter can be used to any advantage, you are at liberty to so use it. What I have to say, I say most cheerfully; and more I could not now say consistently.

Yours as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

## LETTER TO JOHN D. JOHNSTON

SPRINGFIELD, February 23, 1850.

*Dear Brother:* Your letter about a mail contract was received yesterday. I have made out a bid for you at \$120, guaranteed it myself, got our P. M. here to certify it, and send it on. Your former letter, concerning some man's claim for a pension, was also received. I had the claim examined by those who are practised in such matters, and they decide he cannot get a pension.

As you make no mention of it, I suppose you had not learned that we lost our little boy. He was sick fifteen days, and died in the morning of the first day of this month. It was not our first, but our second child. We miss him very much. Your brother, in haste,

A. LINCOLN.

To JOHN D. JOHNSTON.

## RESOLUTIONS ON THE DEATH OF JUDGE NATHANIEL POPE, June 3, 1850

Circuit and District Court of the U. S. in and for the State and District of Illinois. Monday, June 3, 1850.

. . . On the opening of the Court this morning, the Hon. A. Lincoln, a member of the

Bar of this Court, suggested the death of the Hon. Nathaniel Pope, late a judge of this Court, since the adjournment of the last term; whereupon, in token of respect for the memory of the deceased, it is ordered that the Court do now adjourn until to-morrow morning at ten o'clock. . . .

The Hon. Stephen T. Logan, the Hon. Norman H. Purple, the Hon. David L. Gregg, the Hon. A. Lincoln, and George W. Meeker, Esq., were appointed a Committee to prepare resolutions. . . . Whereupon, the Hon. Stephen T. Logan, in behalf of the Committee, presented the following preamble and resolutions:

*Whereas* the Hon. Nathaniel Pope, District Judge of the United States Court for the District of Illinois, having departed this life during the last vacation of said Court, and the members of the bar of said Court entertaining the highest veneration for his memory, a profound respect for his ability, great experience, and learning as a Judge, and cherishing for his many virtues, public and private, his earnest simplicity of character and unostentatious deportment both in his public and private relations, the most lively and affectionate recollections, have

*Resolved*, That as a manifestation of their deep sense of the loss which has been sustained in his death, they will wear the usual badge of mourning during the residue of the term.

*Resolved*, That the Chairman communicate to the family of the deceased a copy of these proceedings, with an assurance of our sincere condolence on account of their heavy bereavement.

*Resolved*, That the Hon. A. Williams, District Attorney of this Court, be requested in behalf of the meeting to present these proceedings to the Circuit Court, and respectfully to ask that they may be entered on the records.

E. N. POWELL, Sec'y.

SAMUEL H. TREAT, Ch'm.

FRAGMENT. NOTES FOR A LECTURE [July 1,  
1850?]

**N**IAGARA FALLS! By what mysterious power is it that millions and millions are drawn from all parts of the world to gaze upon Niagara Falls? There is no mystery about the thing itself. Every effect is just as any intelligent man, knowing the causes, would anticipate without seeing it. If the water moving onward in a great river reaches a point where there is a perpendicular jog of a hundred feet in descent in the bottom of the river, it is plain the water will have a violent and continuous plunge at that point. It is also plain, the water, thus plunging, will foam and roar, and send up a mist continuously, in which last, during sunshine, there will be perpetual rainbows. The mere physical of Niagara Falls is only this. Yet this is really a very small part of that world's wonder. Its power to excite reflection and emotion is its great charm. The geologist will demonstrate that the plunge, or fall, was once at Lake Ontario, and has worn its way back to its present position; he will ascertain how fast it is wearing now, and

DIE SCHINELLEN DES NIAGARA





so get a basis for determining how long it has been wearing back from Lake Ontario, and finally demonstrate by it that this world is at least fourteen thousand years old. A philosopher of a slightly different turn will say, "Niagara Falls is only the lip of the basin out of which pours all the surplus water which rains down on two or three hundred thousand square miles of the earth's surface." He will estimate with approximate accuracy that five hundred thousand tons of water fall with their full weight a distance of a hundred feet each minute—thus exerting a force equal to the lifting of the same weight, through the same space, in the same time. And then the further reflection comes that this vast amount of water, constantly pounding down, is supplied by an equal amount constantly lifted up, by the sun; and still he says, "If this much is lifted up for this one space of two or three hundred square miles, an equal amount must be lifted up for every other equal space;" and he is overwhelmed in the contemplation of the vast power the sun is constantly exerting in the quiet noiseless operation of lifting water up to be rained down again.

But still there is more. It calls up the indefinite past. When Columbus first sought this continent—when Christ suffered on the cross—when Moses led Israel through the Red Sea—

nay, even when Adam first came from the hand of his Maker: then, as now, Niagara was roaring here. The eyes of that species of extinct giants whose bones fill the mounds of America have gazed on Niagara, as ours do now. Contemporary with the first race of men, and older than the first man, Niagara is strong and fresh to-day as ten thousand years ago. The Mammoth and Mastodon, so long dead that fragments of their monstrous bones alone testify that they ever lived, have gazed on Niagara—in that long, long time never still for a single moment [never dried], never froze, never slept, never rested.

FRAGMENT. NOTES FOR LAW LECTURE [July 1,  
1850?] <sup>1</sup>

I am not an accomplished lawyer. I find quite as much material for a lecture in those points wherein I have failed, as in those wherein I have been moderately successful. The lead-

<sup>1</sup> While Lincoln was in the ill-fated partnership with Berry at store-keeping he began to study law. Ultimately with the help of Stuart, and more especially through Stephen Logan, Lincoln became a good lawyer. His first appearance at court was made in October, 1836. His fee for this case was three dollars. Of Lincoln's ability as a lawyer, Judge David Davis says: "In all the elements that constitute a great lawyer he had few equals. . . . He seized the strong points of a cause and presented them with clearness and compactness. His mind was logical and direct, and he did not indulge in extraneous dis-

ing rule for the lawyer, as for the man of every other calling, is diligence. Leave nothing for to-morrow which can be done to-day. Never let your correspondence fall behind. Whatever piece of business you have in hand, before stopping, do all the labor pertaining to it which can then be done. When you bring a common-law suit, if you have the facts for doing so, write the declaration at once. If a law point be involved, examine the books, and note the authority you rely on upon the declaration itself, where you are sure to find it when wanted. The same of defenses and pleas. In business not likely to be litigated,—ordinary collection cases, foreclosures, partitions, and the like,—make all examinations of titles, and note them, and even draft orders and decrees in advance. This course has a triple advantage; it avoids omissions and neglect, saves your labor when once done, performs the labor out of court when you have leisure, rather than in court when you have not. Extemporaneous speaking should be practised and cultivated. It is the lawyer's avenue to the public. However able and faithful he may be in other respects, people are slow to bring him business if he cannot make a speech. And yet cussion. . . . His power of comparison was large, and he rarely failed in a legal discussion to use that means of reasoning. The framework of his mental and moral being was honesty, and a wrong cause was poorly defended by him."

there is not a more fatal error to young lawyers than relying too much on speech-making. If any one, upon his rare powers of speaking, shall claim an exemption from the drudgery of the law, his case is a failure in advance.

Discourage litigation. Persuade your neighbors to compromise whenever you can. Point out to them how the nominal winner is often a real loser—in fees, expenses, and waste of time. As a peace-maker the lawyer has a superior opportunity of being a good man. There will still be business enough.

Never stir up litigation. A worse man can scarcely be found than one who does this. Who can be more nearly a fiend than he who habitually overhauls the register of deeds in search of defects in titles, whereon to stir up strife, and put money in his pocket? A moral tone ought to be infused into the profession which should drive such men out of it.

The matter of fees is important, far beyond the mere question of bread and butter involved. Properly attended to, fuller justice is done to both lawyer and client. An exorbitant fee should never be claimed. As a general rule never take your whole fee in advance, nor any more than a small retainer. When fully paid beforehand, you are more than a common mortal if you can feel the same interest in the case,

as if something was still in prospect for you, as well as for your client. And when you lack interest in the case the job will very likely lack skill and diligence in the performance. Settle the amount of fee and take a note in advance. Then you will feel that you are working for something, and you are sure to do your work faithfully and well. Never sell a fee note—at least not before the consideration service is performed. It leads to negligence and dishonesty—negligence by losing interest in the case, and dishonesty in refusing to refund when you have allowed the consideration to fail.

There is a vague popular belief that lawyers are necessarily dishonest. I say vague, because when we consider to what extent confidence and honors are reposed in and conferred upon lawyers by the people, it appears improbable that their impression of dishonesty is very distinct and vivid. Yet the impression is common, almost universal. Let no young man choosing the law for a calling for a moment yield to the popular belief—resolve to be honest at all events; and if in your own judgment you cannot be an honest lawyer, resolve to be honest without being a lawyer. Choose some other occupation, rather than one in the choosing of which you do, in advance, consent to be a knave.

LETTER TO JOHN D. JOHNSTON<sup>1</sup>

January [2?], 1851.

*Dear Johnston:* Your request for eighty dollars I do not think it best to comply with now. At the various times when I have helped you a little you have said to me, "We can get along very well now," but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again. Now, this can only happen by some defect in your conduct. What that defect is, I think I know. You are not lazy, and still you are an idler. I doubt whether, since I saw you, you have done a good whole day's work in any one day. You do not very much dislike to work, and still you do not work much, merely because it does not seem to you that you could get much for it. This habit of uselessly wasting time is the whole difficulty; it is vastly important to you, and still more so to your children, that you should break the habit. It is more important to them, because they have longer to live, and can keep out of an idle habit

<sup>1</sup> Apropos of the correspondence with John D. Johnston, his step-mother's son, a well-meaning but shiftless fellow, Nicolay and Hay in their life of Lincoln, state that "a volume of disquisition could not put more clearly before the reader the difference between Abraham Lincoln and the common run of Southern and Western rural laborers." Lincoln's good advice to his foster-brother and gentle guardianship of his step-mother, as evinced in these early letters, ever remain proof of his sterling character.

before they are in it, easier than they can get out after they are in.

You are now in need of some money; and what I propose is, that you shall go to work, "tooth and nail," for somebody who will give you money for it. Let father and your boys take charge of your things at home, prepare for a crop, and make a crop, and you go to work for the best money wages, or in discharge of any debt you owe, that you can get; and, to secure you a fair reward for your labor, I now promise you, that for every dollar you will, between this and the first of May, get for your own labor, either in money or as your own indebtedness, I will then give you one other dollar. By this, if you hire yourself at ten dollars a month, from me you will get ten more, making twenty dollars a month for your work. In this I do not mean you shall go off to St. Louis, or the lead mines, or the gold mines in California, but I mean for you to go at it for the best wages you can get close to home in Coles County. Now, if you will do this, you will be soon out of debt, and, what is better, you will have a habit that will keep you from getting in debt again. But, if I should now clear you out of debt, next year you would be just as deep in as ever. You say you would almost give your place in heaven for seventy or eighty dollars. Then you value your

place in heaven very cheap, for I am sure you can, with the offer I make, get the seventy or eighty dollars for four or five months' work. You say if I will furnish you the money you will deed me the land, and, if you don't pay the money back, you will deliver possession. Nonsense! If you can't now live with the land, how will you then live without it? You have always been kind to me, and I do not mean to be unkind to you. On the contrary, if you will but follow my advice, you will find it worth more than eighty times eighty dollars to you.

Affectionately your brother,  
A. LINCOLN.

\*LETTER TO CHARLES HOYT

SPRINGFIELD, January 11, 1851.

*My Dear Sir:* Our case is decided against us. The decision was announced this morning. Very sorry, but there is no help. The history of the case since it came here is this: On Friday morning last, Mr. Joy filed his papers, and entered his motion for a mandamus, and urged me to take up the motion as soon as possible. I already had the points, and authorities sent me, by you and by Mr. Goodrich but had not studied them. I began preparing as fast as possible.

The evening of the same day I was again urged to take up the case. I refused on the

ground that I was not ready, and on which plea I also got off over Saturday. But on Monday (the 14th) I had to go into it. We occupied the whole day, I using the large part. I made every point and used every authority sent me by yourself and by Mr. Goodrich; and in addition all the points I could think of and all the authorities I could find myself. When I closed the argument on my part, a large package was handed me, which proved to be the Plat you sent me. The court received it of me, but it was not different from the Plat already on the record. I do not think I could ever have argued the case better than I did. I did nothing else, but prepare *to argue* and *argue* this case, from Friday morning till Monday evening. Very sorry for the result; but I do not think it could have been prevented

Your friend as ever,  
A. LINCOLN.

#### LETTER TO JOHN D. JOHNSTON

SPRINGFIELD, January 12, 1851.

*Dear Brother:* On the day before yesterday I received a letter from Harriet, written at Greenup. She says she has just returned from your house, and that father is very low and will hardly recover. She also says you have written

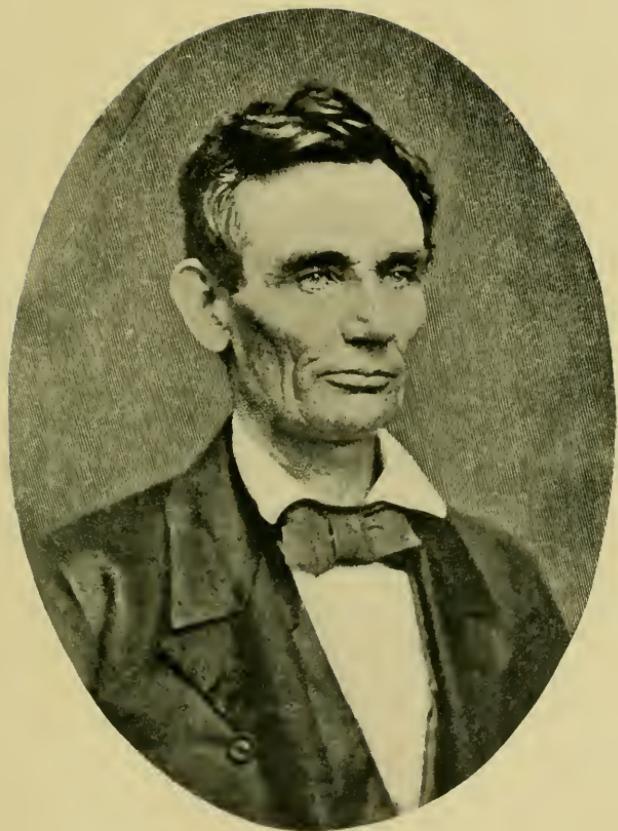
me two letters, and that although you do not expect me to come now, you wonder that I do not write.

I received both your letters, and although I have not answered them, it is not because I have forgotten them, or been uninterested about them, but because it appeared to me that I could write nothing which would do any good. You already know I desire that neither father nor mother shall be in want of any comfort, either in health or sickness, while they live; and I feel sure you have not failed to use my name, if necessary, to procure a doctor, or anything else for father in his present sickness. My business is such that I could hardly leave home now, if it was not as it is, that my own wife is sick-a-bed. (It is a case of baby-sickness, and I suppose is not dangerous.) I sincerely hope father may recover his health, but at all events, tell him to remember to call upon and confide in our great and good and merciful Maker, who will not turn away from him in any extremity. He notes the fall of a sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads, and He will not forget the dying man who puts his trust in Him. Say to him that if we could meet now it is doubtful whether it would not be more painful than pleasant, but that if it be his lot to go now, he will soon have a joyous meeting with many loved



Abraham Lincoln

*Reproduced from an Old Daguerreotype made about  
1858, and now in the possession of Major  
William H. Lambert, of Philadelphia.*





ones gone before, and where the rest of us, through the help of God, hope ere long to join them.

Write to me again when you receive this.

Affectionately,

A. LINCOLN.

\*LETTER TO MESSRS. BROWNING AND BUSHNELL.

SPRINGFIELD, March 28, 1851.

MESSRS. BROWNING & BUSHNELL.

*Gentlemen:* Your letter is received. I have made the arrangement to use the Hoyt evidence in the other cases.

The new act of Congress provides that all cases begun here shall be tried here and not go to Chicago at all. All our Patent cases were begun here. It also fixes the summer term here in July, instead of June as heretofore.

So no trouble is created in our Patent cases by the new law. In haste,

Yours as ever,

A. LINCOLN. .

LETTER TO JOHN D. JOHNSTON

SPRINGFIELD, August 31, 1851.

*Dear Brother:* Inclosed is the deed for the land. We are all well, and have nothing in the

way of news. We have had no cholera here for about two weeks. Give my love to all, and especially to mother. Yours as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

### LETTER TO JOHN D. JOHNSTON

SHELBYVILLE, November 4, 1851.

*Dear Brother:* When I came into Charleston day before yesterday, I learned that you are anxious to sell the land where you live and move to Missouri. I have been thinking of this ever since, and cannot but think such a notion is utterly foolish. What can you do in Missouri better than here? Is the land any richer? Can you there, any more than here, raise corn and wheat and oats without work? Will anybody there, any more than here, do your work for you? If you intend to go to work, there is no better place than right where you are; if you do not intend to go to work, you cannot get along anywhere. Squirming and crawling about from place to place can do no good. You have raised no corn this year; and what you really want is to sell the land, get the money, and spend it. Part with the land you have, and, my life upon it, you will never after own a spot big enough to bury you in. Half you will get for the land you will spend in moving to Missouri, and the other half you will

eat, drink, and wear out, and no foot of land will be bought. Now, I feel it my duty to have no hand in such a piece of foolery. I feel that it is so even on your own account, and particularly on mother's account. The eastern forty acres I intend to keep for mother while she lives; if you will not cultivate it, it will rent for enough to support her—at least, it will rent for something. Her dower in the other two forties she can let you have, and no thanks to me. Now, do not misunderstand this letter; I do not write it in any unkindness. I write it in order, if possible, to get you to face the truth, which truth is, you are destitute because you have idled away all your time. Your thousand pretenses for not getting along better are all nonsense; they deceive nobody but yourself. Go to work is the only cure for your case.

*[The Following Paragraph is Addressed to his Step-Mother]*

A word to mother. Chapman tells me he wants you to go and live with him. If I were you I would try it awhile. If you get tired of it (as I think you will not), you can return to your own home. Chapman feels very kindly to you, and I have no doubt he will make your situation very pleasant. Sincerely your son,

A. LINCOLN.

## LETTER TO JOHN D. JOHNSTON

SHELBYVILLE, November 9, 1851.

*Dear Brother:* When I wrote you before, I had not received your letter. I still think as I did, but if the land can be sold so that I get three hundred dollars to put to interest for mother, I will not object, if she does not. But before I will make a deed, the money must be had, or secured beyond all doubt, at ten per cent.

As to Abram, I do not want him, on my own account; but I understand he wants to live with me, so that he can go to school and get a fair start in the world, which I very much wish him to have. When I reach home, if I can make it convenient to take, I will take him, provided there is no mistake between us as to the object and terms of my taking him.

In haste, as ever,

A. LINCOLN.

\*LETTER TO JOHN D. JOHNSTON<sup>1</sup>

SPRINGFIELD, November 25, 1851.

*Dear Brother:* Your letter of the 22d is just received. Your proposal about selling the east

<sup>1</sup> Lincoln's mother died when he was nine years old. Sally Bush Johnston, whom Thomas Lincoln took as his second wife, was a woman of intelligence. She recognized the fine qualities of her young step-son, Abraham, and encouraged him to the best of her ability. There ever existed a warm esteem between

forty acres of land is all that I want or could claim for *myself*; but I am not satisfied with it on *mother's* account. I want her to have her living, and I feel that it is my duty, to some extent, to see that she is not wronged. She had a right of dower (that is, the use of one-third for life) in the other two forties; but, it seems, she has already let you take that, hook and line. She now has the use of the whole of the east forty, as long as she lives; and if it be sold, of course she is entitled to the interest on *all* the money it brings, as long as she lives; but you propose to sell it for three hundred dollars, take one hundred away with you, and leave her two hundred at 8 per cent, making her the *enormous* sum of 16 dollars a year. Now, if you are satisfied with treating her in that way, I am not. It is true, that you are to have that forty for two hundred dollars, *at* mother's death; but you are not to have it *before*. I am confident that land can be made to produce for mother at least \$30 a year, and I can not, to oblige any living person, consent that she shall be put on an allowance of sixteen dollars a year. Yours, etc.,

A. LINCOLN.

them. Shortly before her death she said: "I can truly say what scarcely one mother in one thousand can say, that Abraham Lincoln never gave me a cross word or look and never refused in fact or appearance to do anything I asked him."

CALL FOR WHIG CONVENTION, December [4?],  
1851*To the Whigs of Illinois*

The Whigs of the State of Illinois are respectfully requested to meet in convention at Springfield, on the fourth Monday of December next, to take into consideration such action as upon consultation and deliberation may be deemed necessary, proper, and effective for the best interests of the party, and to secure a more thorough organization of the Whig party at an early day.

(Signed)

Abraham Lincoln,  
J. T. Stuart,  
J. C. Conkling,  
H. O. Merriman,  
Geo. W. Meeker,  
J. O. Norton,  
Churchill Coffing,  
Joseph Gillespie,  
Isaac Hardy,  
Horace Miller,  
E. B. Washburne,  
Henry Watterman,

Ezra Griffith,  
Samuel Haller,  
Joseph T. Eccles,  
Jas. W. Singleton,  
O. H. Browning,  
C. W. Craig,  
J. L. Wilson,  
B. G. Wheeler,  
H. D. Risley,  
Levi Davis,  
B. S. Edwards,  
And many others.















